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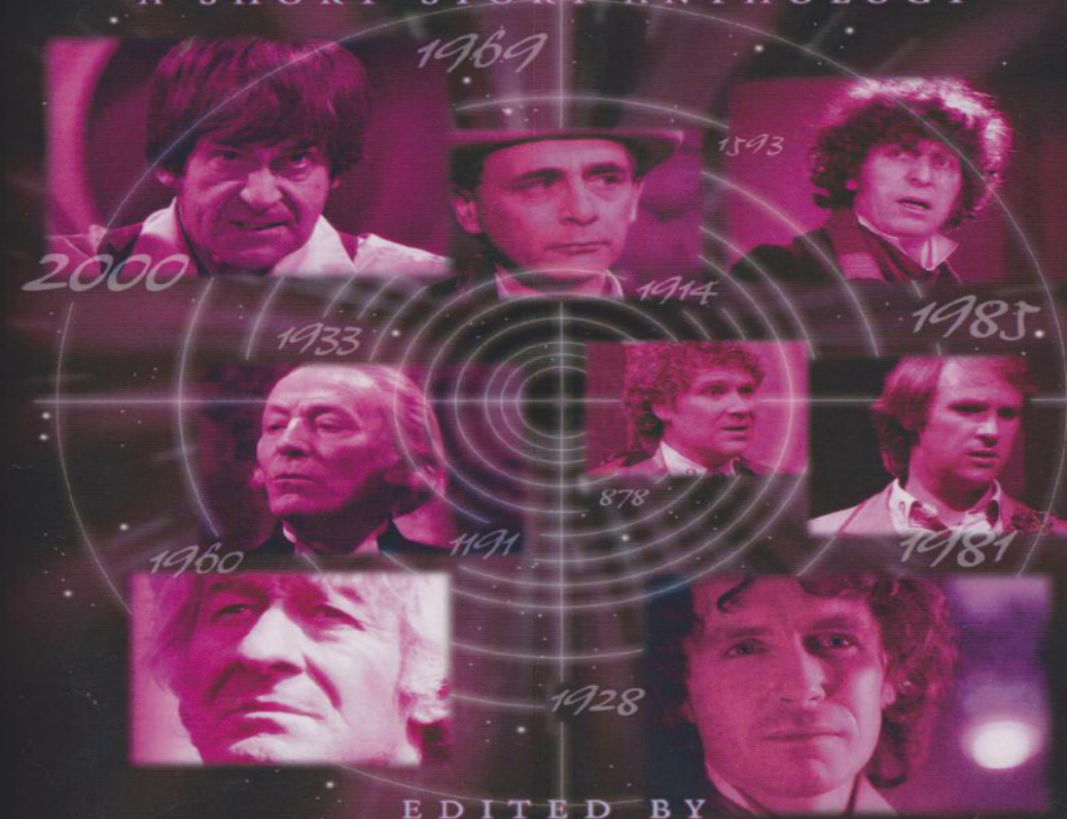
DOCTOR WHO

SHORT TRIPS: PAST TENSE

A SHORT-STORY ANTHOLOGY



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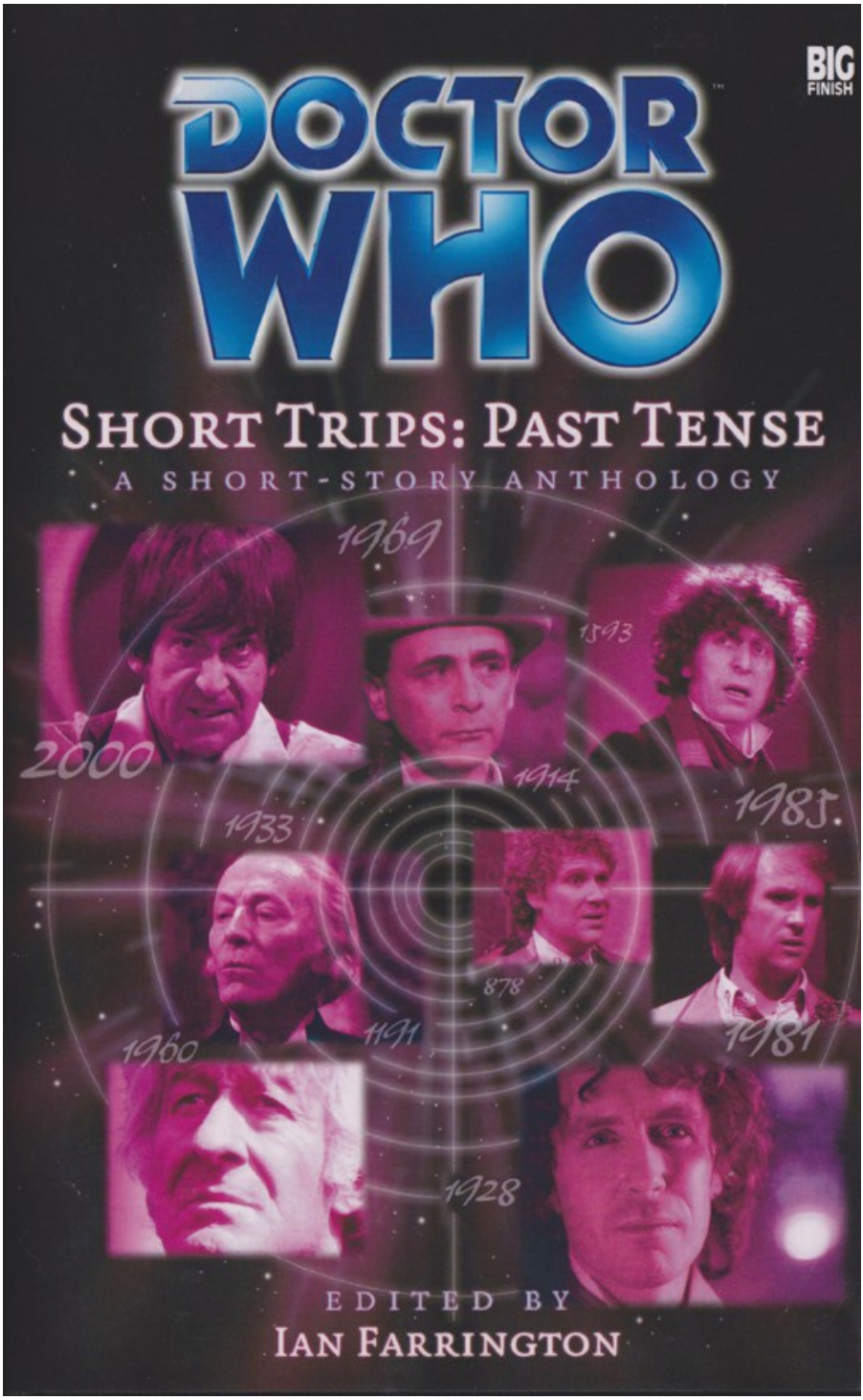
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DOCTOR WHO

SHORT TRIPS: PAST TENSE

A SHORT-STORY ANTHOLOGY

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IAN FARRINGTON

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The Immortals

Simon Guerrier

Udilf had always taken pride in his work. The town had been producing weapons at an unprecedented, desperate rate

for days, but Udilf couldn't help being a craftsman. His would be the finest, hardest, most perfectly weighted spears,

made from the unyielding heartwood of the yew, and so Infused with the dark magic of that tree. He still believed that

artistry, what he called 'craft', set them apart from the beasts and creatures. That Was more important now than

ever.

There had been a time when Udilf had worked in here every day. The workshop would seem cluttered to the

untrained eye, but he knew better. Fighting for space on the work surfaces were various blades and measuring

instruments, a range of mallets, chisels, sanders, all kinds of string, bottles of wax polish and linseed oil.All round the

room there were things made, things *being* made and equipment for testing and stressing them. But Udilf had

everything where he needed it, within arm's reach and at a height that meant he could work for hours into the

night and never strain his back or his knees. By focusing on the work he could Almost put out of his mind what

they were all facing.

'Udilfi' called Eeta, running into the workshop. Udilf pretended

not to hear het Mang, Eeta's father, often got rid of

her with errands. Now he had her making sure Udilf hadn't wrecked the workshop. Udilf didn't want to be disturbed.

Let someone else be nursemaid.

Eeta stood, panting from the run up the hill and because of that eternally blocked nose. When he didn't look up, Eeta

dashed forward and snatched the nearly finished spear from his hands. She held his gaze defiantly, daring him to act.

Still a child, she was tougher and more resourceful than any boy her age. One day she would make a fearsome - and

useful - warrior.

'What is it now, girl?' said Udilf. He put the emphasis on the last word, to put her in her place.

More strangers,' said Eeta.

Udilf didn't say a word as he gathered up his afternoon's work, giving the spears to the girl to carry. He left the

workshop and headed down the lane with long, majestic strides. It didn't do for the leader of the town to be seen in a

hurry. Running would only panic the people further. Even so, Is he made his way down the muddy main street, he

could sense faces turning towards him, seemingly eager for any assurance he could give, any news. He offered a stern

nod or brave smile to anyone who caught his eye. It felt false, but what else could he do?

A crowd had gathered around the wooden gatehouse, jostling to see inside. Every one of them had a weapon. They

had taken the new law to heart.

'Get on with the tasks you have been set: Udilf growled, taking many of them by surprise. Udilf bellowed again and this

time the mob made room For him. The reinforcements to the

town's defences meant they had nowhere to manoeuvre,

so Udilf had to shove t 2

hrough them to get inside. The crowd closed ranks again behind him as he passed.

He stooped as he went in - the low ceiling of the gatehouse prevented horses entering the town. The small, snug room

had only the one door through which he had entered to offer illumination. Dark and dangerous, it had always been the

least favoured post of the town's militia. Five men in leather jerkins and metal helmets were crammed inside, their

swords drawn.They were the town's first line of defence, and though they got the best food and all due respect, these days

they looked haggard and pale. Mang, the gatekeeper, had never complained to Udilf about being stationed here, but his

thoughts were plain in his eyes, and he had his daughter pester Udilf with silly errands all the time. Now, he didn't even

salute the leader. He just shrugged towards the observation tube, a crooked pipe set into the thick planks of the

town's walls. Polished silver discs placed wherever the pipe bent let you watch the people standing outside. Udilf put a hand

over one eye and looked into the pipe.

His mouth fell open at what he saw. He stepped back, unsure what to say.

`They seem unarmed,' said Mang, as if it were an insult.

Ànd two women!' Udilf agreed:A child could not be so reckless!'

Or stupid: said Mang. They must be players with those gaudy costumes.'

But to be openly abroad...' Udilf shook his head.

`They'll have a smart answer, be sure of it: Mang had never forgiven the storyteller who, years before, had teased him for his

red hair. He never forgot a grudge.'We let them in?'

They have no weapons,' said Udilf. And there are women. We would be murdering them ourselves if we turned them away.'

Mang didn't look as if he agreed, but at his signal two of the men heaved the weighted levers of the great door, and slowly it

creaked ajar. Mang moved to the gap, but before he got there one of the players stepped boldly through, pulling off his

silly little hat and flapping it at his companions to stop them following him inside. His clothes were strange, dainty and

spotlessly clean.They wouldn't keep the winter out. Nor would the posie on his lapel hide the stink of the town. He was tall,

fair and girlishly pretty - having no beard enhanced that. He *bad* to be a player, and since he was the little group's leader,

he had to be the Player King.

The Player King let his eyes adjust to the darkness, rolled his hat up and tucked it inside his silly fawn coat. He smiled.

`Hello!' he said breezily, his voice soft and feminine yet imperious. He probably got his way a lot among the other

players. He had, however, addressed himself to Mang, assuming the burly gatekeeper to be the one In charge. Udilf

realised he still had on his workshop apron, so no doubt looked like a shopkeeper. How soon would that get all about

the town? He had to reassert his command

'I am leader here,' he said, with terrible calm.

'Oh dear,' the Player King grinned. And first impressions are always so important. I'm the Doctor,' he said, putting

his hand out to Udilf - the gesture of equals meeting. Udilf looked at the man's hand - soft and unsullied by real

work - then looked back up at the man.The Player King snatched his hand back as if bitten, and hid it behind his

back. The expression on his face changed, suddenly serious, and he bowed his head.

`Sire,' he said - and Udilf had never been called that before - 'I humbly request sanctuary for myself and my

companions:

`You have no weapons with which to protect your women?' asked Udilf.

'We usually rely on our wits,' admitted the Player King.

'But you know of the creatures that plague these lands?'

'We found the remains of a village earlier this afternoon; said the Player King„ levelly:The people had been

butchered.Women, children... The way be said it gave Udilf gooseflesh. His quiet manner belied ferocious anger. It

made Mang and the other men uneasy, too. The marks in the ground, the evidence, suggested a party of horsemen.And in

the last few days.'

'We do not expect to hold out to them long; said Udilf, hut any who will fight alongside us are welcome:

'Whatever assistance I can offer...' said the Doctor.

'I told you I'd get you home,' said the Doctor brightly as soon as they had been left alone. Udilf had given them over

to Habir, a fierce-looking woman of late middle-age and few teeth. She had taken them up through the narrow,

uneven lanes to a shambly angled house that had a spare room. The room had no windows, no furniture and smelt

faintly of urine and old ale.The Doctor had been profusely grateful and chatty, but failed to win the old woman over

He was faring no bet 3ter with Tegan. 4

'Home?' she whined:My shoes are ruined and this isn't even England!'

'Well, yes,' said the Doctor. But we do know we're in Europe - the furthest part of Eastern Europe, admittedly. But

considering how far we've actually come, that's really not very far out at all.'

'The Doctor's control of the TARDIS is bound to be subject to a degree of error so soon after his regeneration,' said

Nyssa.

"Thank you, Nyssa,' said the Doctor, stuffily.

Òh, she's right, isn't she?' Adric added.

All right, all right!' the Doctor sighed, gazing up at the ceiling. 'So we're not exactly where we're supposed to be. There

are more pressing worries'

'Do you even know what year this is?' said Tegan.

The people here are too primitive for accurate time-keeping,' said Nyssa, kindly

About a thousand years before your time,' the Doctor said.

`You can't know that, said Adric.

Òur host asked us where we were from,' the Doctor explained. Tegan brightened as she understood.

And he asked you about King Something-or-other!` she said.

Traken once had a monarchic system of government,' said Nyssa. 'At

what stage in your development did you give up yours, Tegan?'

'Ethelred; said the Doctor sternly before Tegan could reply, `died in the

year 1016. So we know roughly when we are.'

`*Very* roughly'Adric scoffed. 'It's hardly reliable data:

'It will do for now,' said the Doctor. And here's our chance to

glean the latest news:

His companions exchanged curious looks, unsure what he meant. A moment later the door swung open and Habir and the

girl, Eeta, came in. They had bundles of cut reeds with them. Habir ignored the Doctor's gallant efforts to help as she

dropped the reeds in the corner and began organising the basic bedding for them. He seemed unable to strike up even the

most general conversation.

`You can tell us about the people attacking you, can't you?' asked Adric, having lost all patience. Habir didn't even look up

from her work.

`The creatures take the young women and food, and burn everything else,' she said, just as bluntly

`Creatures?' asked Nyssa. 'They didn't share human physiognomy?' Habir didn't answer.

`She means they didn't look like us?' said the Doctor.

Habir continued to ignore him and Eeta, anxious to please it seemed, answered for her. 'Their faces were different,

twisted, she said. And though we shot them many times, they just pulled the arrows out of their strange, ghostly skin. My

father says they are demons...'

`Could they be a society indigenous to Earth, Doctor?' asked Nyssa. `What do you think,Tegan?' he said.

`But aliens didn't come to Earth in the eleventh century!' said Tegan. They can't have done:

Ìf they are understood as demons and monsters by these people: Nyssa explained, 'in your time they will have been

assimilated into folklore'

'Even so,' said the Doctor. 'Eeta, why does Udilf think these creatures will attack again?'

'The raids have come every handful of days, and now all the villages are empty and the people have taken refuge

here'

'You mean we're trapped in the town?' asked Adric.

'We must help them, Doctor,' said Nyssa. He nodded slowly, thinking hard.

Udilf had been looking over the work of the seamstresses, busy making Leather jerkins for the fighting men. He had

taken to touring the town twice a day, showing his face and offering encouragement to all the different work

parties.

They all seemed so pleased to see him, so grateful.Again he felt like he was lying to them - truly, these chores just kept

them busy and away from thoughts of imminent doom.

He made a little time to hear the Doctor's suggestions, as he did for everyone else. They stepped away from the

women to talk, but it needn't have been a secret. Anyone would have told the Doctor his plan was madness. They had

seen it before.

'Our priest tried to reason with them,' he told the Doctor. `The first time the creatures came to the town,Alfeeger

walked out to meet them, calling on God for protection. They hacked him to pieces.'

'Udilf, I really think I can make a difference; said the Doctor, so sure of himself that Udilf didn't feel he could argue.

'I suppose anything is worth trying,' he said.

'And the two women can stay here while I'm gone?'

'If your efforts fail, I can't guarantee their safety'

'Surely you can keep the creatures out of the town?' said the Doctor, horrified.

'Our stores are low' said Udilf. The land is hot and fertile through the summer months but with winter coming it's like

iron. The creatures ransacked our stores.To survive we will have to leave the town - but with the creatures abroad it is

not safe to lead a convoy. They have already breached the town's walls and now if they just wait we'll be too weak to light

them. I have no answer to these ungodly times!

'They will listen to me: said the Doctor.

'A necromancer would find it a job to get dose to them.'

'I do have a few tricks up my sleeve:The Doctor smiled.

'You will of course take our best arms.'

'Thank you,' said the Doctor, 'but I'm hoping there's no need for that' Udilf couldn't believe him. 'They'll tear you apart!'

'Without weapons, I am not a threat to them and they'll talk to me. You let us into the town for the same reason'

Ì only hope you are right,' said Udilf. 'You mean to take your other companion with you? The boy?'

Òh yes,' said the Doctor. 'He'll be keen to come along.'

`How much further?' said Adric, dragging his feet. They had walked all afternoon, passing ruined villages and farm

buildings, making their way beyond the flat open lands the town overlooked and into wilder terrain. As darkness

came, their path seemed stranger still - the skeletal trees like twisted bodies.The place was eerily silent and they'd not

seen any sign of the creatures they were looking for. Would they be out here all night?

`We're gaining on them all the time, said the Doctor, examining the ground beside a hedgerow. He had that wistful,

far-off tone that meant he wasn't really listening.

Ànd they *are* extraterrestrials?'Adric prompted.

`They're not harmed when the arrows hit them, said the Doctor the arrows just bounced off, we might put it

down to chainmail or plate armour, but they stick in and still do no damage... These creatures are *advanced:*

`*So* how will you stop them? Not by force:

`They can't be here by choice, so they're taking their frustration out on the locals. We'll offer to help repair their

spaceship, or offer them a lift if need be.And everyone lives happily ever after. What's this?'

He squatted down on his haunches to examine something an animal had left behind. Recently, he said, prodding it

with one finger.There were some avenues of expertise Adric could live without learning.

Leaving the Doctor to his filthy work, Adric wandered on, one hand brushing the hedge distractedly. He was

hungry. All he'd been able to think about for hours was Nyssa and Tegan, whiling the time away back in the town

with nothing to do but be waited on. They'd both protested about being left behind, of course. ust as Adric had

argued that he didn't need to come too. The Doctor's argument about 'unsophisticated times', where your gender

defined what you could and couldn't do, hadn't won them over. But he had still got his way.

He was so swept up in these unhappy thoughts that he missed the man who'd been in the tree above, and now leapt

on him. One minute Adric had been moping along feeling his day couldn't get any worse, the next he was pinned

down in the mud, being yelled at. The point of a dagger pressed against his throat.

`We mean you no harm: said the Doctor, keeping his distance from Adric and his attacker. He spoke calmly, his

tone commanding.

The sweaty, smelly man in the bright shirt eased the pressure off the knife. He stepped away from Adric, and let

him climb to his feet.The man still held the knife out at them, but he was chuckling.

'You're just a boy!' 67the man said. 'Neither of you are soldiers'

'We're looking for the giants, said the Doctor`Maybe you can help us?' `Giants?' laughed the man.

'Perhaps you don't call them that, but you must know who I mean.The creatures.The ones who have been raiding the

villages:

'I know who you mean, said the man, suddenly seriousÌ am the scout for a garrison near here. You must tell my Czar

about your giants!'

By the time dusk came and supper was called, Tegan and Nyssa were famished. Habir had got them working with a

group of middle-aged women, sewing scraps and patches of leather together, making armour for the men. They had been

working flat out to produce the things. They wanted to dress every man in the town ready for a battle that could come at

any time. The men who came for fittings were worn and exhausted, none had slept for days despite Udilf's elegant watch

rota. They all expected to die, and many asked for holy marks to be worked into their dothes - Tegan having to explain

to Nyssa the symbolic value of the crucifix and the fish. Dusk brought a sense of relief. Apparently the Creatures had

only attacked in daylight, so night brought a few hours relief.

But their work didn't end at suppertime. When the townspeople

had assembled in the great hall, Tegan had been

incensed to learn that the men ate first. The women served them, only getting the leftovers when the men were fully

sated. Judging from the meagre spread on the single table by one wall, it didn't look like there was much food to go round.

Nyssa, however, did not complain and got on with the chores.

The Doctor wouldn't want us to act in an anachronistic manner: she explained as they carried dishes back and forth. Sat

around the fire, the men gathered the food in their laps and ate with their fingers. Not one of them had cleaned their hands

first`Remember,Tegan, we both know the customs are strange and primitive, but that won't help us while we're here.'

Even so, Nyssa dropped a flagon of ale all over the man who let his hands wander. The men cheered at this raucously, but

Udilf saw Nyssa's distress and hollered for calm`These womenfolk are my guests,' he said. 'You'll treat them as my own!'

'The archetypal chauvinist!' Tegan muttered as she and Nyssa carried the empty containers away.

We must just hope the Doctor returns soon, said Nyssa.

The scout had taken them some distance through the wood, to a camp of large tents and many horses. The Doctor admitted

he'd never have found the place without their guide.

A court had assembled around a large, low bonfire, and a feast was just beginning. On an ornate throne sat the wiry,

nasty-looking tribal chieftain. His name, the guide said, was Czar U'thai. The Doctor explained to Adric that 'Czar'

meant king, or leader, and derived from 'Caesar' - the emperors of Rome. This meant nothing to Adric, but the

Doctor seemed unduly impressed by how far the Romans' influence had spread. He normally knew everything

about Earth history.

The guide took them forward. Like all his men, Czar U'thai wore smooth, shiny, brightly coloured garments

under his animal skins. His furry hat had horns, and his moustache drooped down either side of his mouth, hanging

in plaits below his chin. His skin was dark, and his eyes narrow. He chewed his fingernails while the Doctor told his

story about giants.

Ìn my land, boys hunt for dragons,' said U'thai. 'They hope stories will be told of their bravery'

`We only mean to speak to them; said the Doctor.

'We can help them,' said Adric, getting a glare from the Doctor. Czar U'thai laughed.

Ànd where would be the glory in that?' he said.

`No glory' said the Doctor. 'How long have you been hunting the creatures?'

The captain of the soldiers stroked his moustache. 'We are not hunting any creatures; he said.

`But you can't have missed them while you've been -' the Doctor began. And then he froze. The chieftain, and

the men around him, began to laugh.

`*You're* the ones attacking the villages!' the Doctor said.

`We came to trade, but they have nothing here we cannot take by force; said U'thai. And since the pass home is

snowed out, we are here for the winter:

`So *you've* been eating the women from the villages?' asked Adric, incredulous. This earned a guffaw from those

around them.

Èating? No,' said

U'thai. 'If you can earn your supper, you'll live long enough to see'

The Doctor and Adric still hadn't come back when the women were finally allowed to take their places among

the men. Nyssa and Tegan tucked in hungrily to what food they could grab. They ate with their fingers, too

starved to complain.

Udilf, meanwhile, had called for quiet. He had no announcements, he said. They would all know when there was

news. Instead, he called on Mang for a story, to give them comfort and heart. Mang feigned reluctance,

allowing a groundswell of cheering. Nyssa and Tegan joined in

with the applause as he got to his feet. He bowed curtly toward Udilf and something passed between the two men.

Tegan wondered whether they might be brothers.

"This story is from my father's time,' said MangÀnd like our days now has a small town holding out against

invaders' An expectant hush descended across the people. Tegan had goosebumps. She loved a good story, and felt

suddenly at home and safe.

Mang drank the atmosphere in.Then he began.

'My father's people had fought the Romans for many years...'

'They can't really be the aliens,' insisted Adric, whispering to the Doctor as they ate. The Doctor had made the

soldiers laugh with a few simple conjuring tricks - palming coins and jewels and then retrieving them from the

chieftain's nose. Adric had been his accomplice, though he hadn't actually had to do anything but stand there. He

didn't like the attention, but they'd been allowed to join the feast.

'Of course they are,' said the Doctor. 'The townspeople haven't seen people from Asia before, so don't know

what to make of the racial characteristics:

'But they're not immortal, they can't be,' said Adric. 'And as for their clothes...'

'Sericulture is a closely guarded secret in the East,' the Doctor said`Silk keeps you warm in the winter, but it's cool in

the summer. Ideal for the climate here, hard-wearing yet light. Exactly the thing for the jobbing soldier:

'And the bright colours?'

'I suppose it's fashionable. And you and I are hardly hued out in dour monochrome; said the Doctor.

They ate well. The bread and meat kept coming and soon Adric felt better for the day's walk. He got second helpings

of vegetables. The Doctor explained that the Europeans, the local people around here, thought of vegetables as peasant

food. But these soldiers had the humility and good sense to eat food from the ground, and it kept them lean and fit.They

might well be in better shape than the townspeople.

'We'll get out when we can,' the Doctor told his companion. He must have said it too loudly

'Doctor, you'll not leave us,' said U'thai. 'Not before the entertainment!' 'Entertainment?' said the Doctor. 'Didn't we already

do that?'

'We have far better than children's games and sleight of hand; said

Ùthai. 'Stand up!'

There was a moment, and then the Doctor and Adric were hauled rudely to their feet by the men beside them. Music

began, a steady, unsavoury beat, to which the men clapped along.

Ì'm sorry I insisted you came with me,' said the Doctor ruefully

Òh, not to worry' grinned Adric, though not as bravely as he'd have liked.They were prodded forward, into the

middle of the party.The music built up to a crescendo, and then one of the men blew a blast on a metal horn.The flap of

a nearby tent swished back.Adric and the Doctor gazed at what lay inside.

Ì don't believe it,' said the Doctor.

'I don't believe it,' said Tegan.

`My account is true,' said Mang angrily 'And guest or no, I'll not hear you call my father a *liar'*

***Tegan,please;* Nyssa was barely able to restrain her from rushing at the gatekeeper**

`But it's the year one thousand! The Romans don't exist any more' `My father fought them with his bare

hands!' Mang said.

`Now Mang,' said Udilf. 'I'm sure the girl meant no ill. She is overwrought, as we all are, and fighting

between ourselves w 10

ill only do our enemies good'

Mang just snorted.The townspeople were with him, all eyes on the two women accusingly.They had probably heard

the story many times before, and were siding with their own.

Sire; pleaded Nyssa, 'my friend is exhausted. I will take her to our room and -'

'We are unoffended; Udilf said with a wave of the hand. 'Aren't we?' He glowered at Mang. Mang nodded, When the

women were gone he started the story again, though even he knew it had lost its rhythm and was spoiled.

`You can't act like that!' Nyssa said crossly. She didn't suit being cross, and as soon as they were on their own,Tegan

had stopped fighting.

But it's not true,' said Tegan. 'The Roman Empire must have ended centuries ago, and by then they were

Christians. His father *couldn't* have fought them...'

"That's as maybe; Nyssa pleaded. 'But it's not use telling them that. In a culture like this, oral traditions are how

the people define themselves, their identity. You challenged Mang's memories of his father. You challenged the

whole town. Wait for the Doctor to return and we can -'

***If* he returns;Tegan interrupted.**

'He will return,' said Nyssa.'He has to:There was something in her eyes. something desperate.

`You know I'm right; said Tegan. 'If they fought the Romans just a generation ago, then history must have

changed'

`We don't know that,' said Nyssa, without conviction.

'Don't we? What could do a thing like that? How am I ever going to get home?'

Nyssa wouldn't answer. Not for the rest of the night.

'They didn't seem unhappy: said Adric sullenly. Somehow he had been persuaded to walk back to the town without

breakfast.The Doctor didn't want to let the soldiers know they were leaving.

Out of the forest and in open country again, the wintry breeze cut into them.Adric huddled his arms around himself.

The Doctor, holding his hat down on his head, seemed to find it all rather bracing.

'Adric, those girls were *terrified:* said the Doctor. 'You could see it in their eyes. Or, worse, they were *resigned* to

their fate.'

'They danced very well: said Adric, a smile stealing onto his face. 'That's hardly the point. They're slaves.

Would you wish the same on Tegan, or Nyssa?'

Actually, now he said it, Adric remembered thinking along those lines the previous night. But he knew better than to

say so. He pulled a suitably penitent frown.

'I still don't understand the rush,' he said. 'They've got supplies for several nights yet.'

'I don't like leaving the girls alone so long: said the Doctor. And we have to report back. We need every moment

available to prepare our defences.'

'But we can't fight them if they don't die.You still haven't even worked out what made the soldiers invincible: said

Adric.

'Oh haven't I?' said the Doctor.

Tegan had only meant to apologise to Mang quickly and then get back to Nyssa and the sewing circle. But Mang

assumed she had come to do penance. He hadn't listened to a word she said about the previous night, he just

handed her the broom and pointed at the wood shavings all around the floor. Eeta, at first nervous around Tegan,

soon mucked in and together they cleaned the workshop and kept from underneath Mang's Feet. Mang, busy

making weapons, did not make it easy for them.

When not the town's gatekeeper, Mang was the carpenter. Whenever they were far enough away from him, Eeta

explained how her father and Udilf had once been partners. Both were good craftsmen, but Udilf had been more of

whatTegan would call a people person, chatting to those that came to their shop and finding out what was *needed* as well

as what was wanted. It had been Udilf who had spotted the need for a special chair for OldVardo, who could no longer sit

comfortably on any normal stool. Mang, the more skilled craftsman, had built the chair - painstaking work that took

several long nights to get right. You could see that surly determination to set the job done in his work now.The

partnership had been perfect.

When the town had needed a new leader, Udilf had been asked to stand. Mang had made every effort to support him

but the situation was still uneasy. Mang showed due deference to the leader, but you could see it in his eyes when he

disagreed with a decision. Mang sometimes spoke to Eeta, too. He thought they should leave the town *now,* not wait

for the creatures to attack again. Whatever the case, the town was dead anyway.

By late afternoon, Mang had already fashioned a number of bows -shorter than Tegan remembered from Robin

Hood films on TV, but deadly nonetheless. His work had reset all their efforts - the workshop was a pigsty again.

`Rabbits!' snapped Tegan when she realised, making Eeta giggle. But the work had at least kept her from thinking -

about history, about time. If history *bad* changed, and she supposed that was quite likely when you flitted around in

a time machine, she'd never get home. Home had been written

over.

Then Nyssa arrived at the workshop, weary and flustered from her'own day's work, to say the Doctor and Adric had

arrived back safely.Tegan felt her heart fall. Now she would have to face facts.

Carrying Mang's bows down the lane to one of the town's newly fashioned armouries gave Tegan time to think

over what she'd say to the Doctor, how she would phrase it. So when he was there waiting for them in the armoury, it

completely threw her.

Èr... hi,' was all she managed.

Ì'm glad to see you're all right,' the Doctor said, his attention clearly elsewhere. He had his glasses on, scrutinising

the weapons already there and bombarding Udilf with questions.Adric leant against the wall looking exhausted. How far

had they been and back since yesterday?

And the range?' asked the Doctor, referring to one of the bows.

Òne hundred yards, to be sure of a kill,' said Udilf. `Further, and you can't be sure.'

And it's small animals you shoot?' asked the Doctor. 'Rabbits and things?'

`We've no need to bring down anything bigger - we have them in pens. They're easy to round up and butcher. But

these bows will kill a man, when they have to.'

The Doctor's eyes were shining. Had he puzzled it all out? 'Well, carry on,' he said, giving nothing away.Ì'll let you

know if I need anything else.'

Udilf obviously thought better of reminding the Doctor who had the authority in the town, and headed outside.

`What did you learn?' asked Nyssa when he had gone.

`We can expect the attack in the next three or four days: said the Doctor, full of nervous energy. 'When we've

dealt with that, it's vital the town is ready to move on. So we'll have to ensure that they're packed:

'We can't leave now?' asked Tegan.

`They'd catch us up. We stand a far better chance of defending ourselves here.'

'You learned how to kill the creatures?' asked Nyssa.

"They're not creatures: said Adric, smugly. 'They're people no different from us'

`Yes: admitted the Doctor, 'though with fairly extravagant tastes'
`But you didn't tell Udilf that!' said Tegan.

Ìf I tell them, we're facing open war. More people will die - on both sides - and for no real good. I just want to scare

the soldiers off long enough for us to escape'

`You still haven't explained the mystery Doctor,' said Nyssa. `How can these soldiers be immortal?'

`They're not,' the Doctor said."They just have better resources'
Ànd those ridiculous costumes; said Adric.

Èeta said their creatures had ghostly skin,' said Tegan. 'They just meant their shirts?'

`But silk wouldn't protect them from bowmen,' said Adric.

'Do you know how arrows work?' asked the Doctor.

Ìt's a simple equation of latent and kinetic forces,' began Nyssa.

`That's the bow,' said the Doctor. 'Arrows also play a part. They have barbed tips' He picked up one of the arrows and

showed them the A-shaped head. 'It goes in at the point easily enough, but try to pull it out again and the barbs snag - it

does even more damage:

'It's horrible,' said Nyssa.

`So what do the shirts do?' asked Adric.

`Silk has a very fine weave, said the Doctor.

'It's made from the s 13

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pit of silkworms!' Tegan explained.Adric and Nyssa pulled faces.Ìve not done Earth's reputation any

good have I?' she added.

The fine weave of the silk,' said the Doctor, determined to explain, 'oldies around the arrowhead. It makes it easy to

withdraw even if it penetrates the skin. The range of the bows they're using here, the shirts practically make them

useless.They're like bullet-proof vests'

'So we just need a better weapon?' said Adric. 'That's easy!'

'There are diplomatic solutions still open to us,' said the Doctor gravely. The soldiers are only interested in killing us,

they won't listen to reason! You *tried* that!'

'They're not the savages you think; said the Doctor.

'They were yesterday, when Nyssa and I had to stay behind: said Tegan. 'And last night when -'Adric began.

'It's about what's right; said the Doctor.

it's about what suits you at any given moment, said Tegan. 'I'm on Adric's side'

`There are going to be sides?' said the Doctor, exasperated.

Ì'm with you; said Nyssa to the Doctor. It's a scientist's duty to find a peaceful answer.'

Adric and Tegan exchanged a look. There was no point arguing

any longer, and they headed outside.

Within an hour of the Player King's return to the town, Mang had been moved from making weapons to digging the

Doctor's trench. It was backbreaking work. They dare not delay, and the trench had to run right the way round the

perimeter of the town. So the Doctor said, but *be* hadn't picked up a shovel, had he? He hadn't got his hands dirty.

The woman with the fire in her, who'd cleaned Mang's workshop and accused him of lying, made her way down the

slope of the trench towards him She seemed nervous of the big, sweaty men working all around her. Long after the age

for finding a husband, Mang thought, with some taming she could make a fine wife. She had brought him a flagon of

ale. He took a long gulp, then passed it on to one of the other men.

`The Doctor sent you?' he asked.

`We're not talking, she said. She was indeed a scold!

`You and he are old friends, and there is a bigger battle to come, Mang said. 'It will be smoothed over soon enough.

I've not even known him a month, and even then he's *changed,'* said Tegan. Ì didn't come to talk about him:

Àre all the women like this where you are from?'

Ì'm one of the quiet ones!' laughed Tegan.

`Tegan is not a name I've heard before'

It's Welsh, originally. I think: she said.

`Welsh. That is... in Africa?'

"The west side of England. I guess these days it'll be full of burly Welshmen giving the English a hard time'

`Maybe that is where we will take the town when this is over. We

need such allies if we are going to survive.'

"That's why I'm here: she said. It's not better *allies* you need. We think you can help yourselves...'

For two days, Nyssa had been alone. She had never been more alone.The Doctor had been too busy with his ditch and

the chemical experiments and the organising.When Nyssa did have time over from the multitude of tasks he had set

her, she only heard tell of Adric and Tegan, who were never to be seen and never returned messages. One time she

thought she had glimpsed Tegan, talking to Mang. She thought Tegan had seen her, too, and then purposefully turned

away. Mang was a big, able man, handsome in a savage sort of way, and of Tegan's own kind. Maybe if history *was*

changing (though they'd not had a chance to discuss it with the Doctor yet), Tegan had made her mind up to stay.

Whatever the outcome of the battle, Nyssa's surrogate family had already been broken up.

The town continued to bustle with activity. Nyssa made her way towards the gatehouse with another tray of the

packages she had made. Again evening had come. Another day gone, another chance for them all to relax. The

soldiers (she refused to call them 'creatures') only ever attacked during the day.

Until now.

The blare of a distant horn cuts through the night. People stop dead, turn. All eyes go down towards the gate. Those

on the higher ground can see over the town's walls, can *see* what is coming at them out of the night. And then there's

the rumbling thunder of approaching hooves.

`Positions!' a mighty voice cries out. It is Udilf, taking command.

People run.A woman falls, and no one has time to heave her out of the mud. They snatch more weapons from the

armouries, all that they can carry

On the roof of the gatehouse stand the Doctor and Udilf. A man with a burning torch stands near them, giving them

light. The Doctor will lead this battle, Udilf is waiting on his word. The horsemen come rumbling nearer. The Doctor

stands still, letting them get close. His hands are in his pockets. but his gaze is steady. He does not even sweat. They can

hear the creatures' shrieks, see the whites of their eyes.

Then the Doctor gives a nod.

Udilf takes the torch from the man behind them.

He tosses it towards the horsemen.

The torch falls away into the dart and goes out.

The horsemen ride ever on, ploughing over the ground where the torch fen.

Suddenly all is light. The horses scream and fall over each other, rather than run into the searing blue-white flames that

reach twenty feet into the air. They send their riders crashing down. The agonised cries of men breaking bones and being

trampled are met with a savage cheer from the town.

The horsemen still come, afraid of nothing Their second wave leaps Into and through the flames unharmed. The

horsemen come on even buster.

And now they have hit the trench.The horses tumble into the gap, and more of the soldiers are crushed and broken. But

they have learnt the lesson already, and those behind them come slower. They stop on their side of the trench, and

ready their bows and catapults. They wait. Expectantly

The Doctor gives another nod, and now all the men on the town's walls hurl out the packages he's had them

prepare. The parcels explode loud and bright as they land at the horsemen's feet. Scarlet and pink clouds sparkle

in the night. There's a peppery tang in the air, thick and ticklish Some of the horses whinny with fright. But the

horsemen stand their ground. One starts to laugh. He points at the Doctor. His comrades soon spot the strangely

dressed clown whose conjuring they have all seen before.Their terrible laughter grows louder.

Czar U'thai, on a horse at the front of his men, gives the order. They ready their bows.Then they set their

arrows alight.

A deluge of fire pours down on the town.

Nyssa had been near the gatehouse when the walls were breached. She had been one of a group fighting the

blazes, trying without hope to prevent the spread of the flames. They had all scattered as soon as the horsemen got

into the town. Nyssa ran too.The Doctor had been on top of the gatehouse, hadn't he? She headed in that direction.

She ran into the path of a horse.The rider lunged at her with his sword, but she dodged back, and the horse ran on

so she was safe. She started on again.

In front of the ruins of the main gate, Udilf stood his ground. Dead men from both sides lay all round him A sword

in each hand, he slashed brutally at any rider who came near. Nyssa saw him bring one of the horsemen down,

turn to fight another and take a sword blow in the face, It split his head apart. Udilf fell meekly backward into the

mud.

Nyssa screamed. Udilf s slayer set his horse towards her. She couldn't move. The horseman leaned forward and

grabbed her, hauling her acrosa his lap. She wriggled and fought, but he held her in place with one hand, With his

other, he struck out at people on the ground. Nyssa screamed again. There was a sudden swirl of inertia, like going

into a swoon. And then she found herself in the mud again.

Are you all right, Nyssa?' asked the Doctor quickly. He must have rescued her. But as she looked up, the

dismounted horseman sprang at them. He grabbed the Doctor's shoulder and flung him to one side. The horseman

ran at him, his sword raised above his head.The Doctor just had time to glance at Nyssa.

She closed her eyes tight, heard the sword rent the air before it struck,

And then the horseman toppled over backwards.The shaft of an arrow sprouted from his heart. Nyssa and the Doctor

looked round. Mang ran towards them, carrying a bow unlike any Nyssa had seen before, one as tall as he was.

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`Doctor' he said, his face ashen. 'They've carried Tegan off '

*

The stories told about that night outlived all those who had been there. They told of the cunning fires the

townspeople had started with, that failed to scare off the invaders. They told how Udilf had died, and Eeta -both

with swords in their hands, outnumbered by foes. They told how their longbows that night had never been

bettered.

Even as an old man, Mang would heckle the tellers and correct their eager reports. True, the longbows he and

Adric had fashioned between them had the power to split oak from two hundred yards.Adric had done the maths,

and Mang had advised on the manufacture, using the unyielding heartwood and pliant softwood of the Yew

together, to maximum effect. But the new bows strained even the strongest men's muscles to use them.Afterwards

there was time for improvements, to train to use them. That first night they had struggled with them. All except one

man.

Mang had seen him fire from the saddle, which no man had ever managed since. The Doctor just leant into the

longbow, hardly seemed to aim and then let the arrow go. He hit everything he meant to - never once spilling blood. He

nicked their clothes and sent them tumbling, or shot their weapons from their hands. Even when he caught up

with the Invaders' chieftain, the one who had carried off Tegan, the Doctor would not kill. He pinned him to a tree,

arrows in all the folds and creases of his clothes, embedded so deep his men would have to cut him free.

But before Mang could ask where he had learnt his skill, the Doctor and 'Megan were gone. Mang had assumed he

would see them back in the town. He and his men had rescued the other women - bruised and harrowed but

alive.Then they had burnt the invaders' camp. But they had let the survivors go.

The stories told of his mercy towards the enemy he had defeated. Mang himself wondered just how the invaders had

fared. Could they have suffered as much as the townspeople?

Trekking through that unremitting winter, dropping one by one, only a handful of his people had finally reached the

Welsh shores.

'I had a few lessons from Robin Hood,' the Doctor explained as they made their way back to the TARDIS. None of his

companions had wanted to stay to see the town pack up and go, none of them could face the goodbyes. Or the

funerals. The Doctor had woken them early, and they had set off without a word. Once they had put some miles

between them and the town, Adric had asked about the Doctor's sharp-shooting.

'Now *Robin* could fire more than twenty arrows a minute; the Doctor went on.

'Robin Hood is only a story,' said Tegan. She seemed much better for daylight and the walk.

'Not when I met him; said the Doctor`The story came later.' `Like Mang's father battling the Romans?' asked

Nyssa.

`Who knows where these things start?' said the Doctor, airily 'Historical details are difficult to pin down until they're put

down on paper.That tale could have been handed down, father-to-son, for generations.

`Mang has his own story now,' said Nyssa. Ì expect it'll be told long after he's passed on:

The Doctor paid no attention to her. He had spotted the TARDIS, nestling under a lone tree on the horizon.

Ìt's a sort of immortality, isn't it?' said Adric.

All our actions have their part in history,' said the Doctor, turning back to his companionsÌt's why the choices we make

are so important:

Ìt's possible to influence the course of the future?' asked Nyssa.

Ìt's not easy to change things, if that's what you mean,' the Doctor replied. But Adric seems to have invented the

longbow. He's scratched his mark in the history books, even if not his name'

`Mang did most of the work, actually' said Adric. 'But apart from worrying the Time Lords, what's wrong with that?

We made a difference for the better, didn't we? We saved all those people:The Doctor shook his head.

`The longbow,' he said, 'will dominate battlefields for the next five hundred years. Can you even *conceive* how many

people your brilliant invention is going to kill?'

`But it's such a difficult thing to draw!' replied AdricÌt'll take years for anyone to master it...'

Ànd that's your answer?' snapped the Doctor. 'How very ethical!' Adric looked to Tegan for help, but she turned her head away,

not wanting to get invo1l8

ved.

Ì'm sorry; said Adric.

`Well,' said the Doctor, gazing towards the TARDIS and the adventures beyond. He turned back, looked like he would say

something, then thought better of it and just patted Adric's arm. 'We'll say no more about it:

Far From Home

Alison Lawson

'Now straight to school, mind, and no messing!'

'Yes, Mam!' Tommy called, already through the front door and on his way to the lane, where his cousin, Ralph,

stood waiting. Tommy's sister, Mary, followed along behind, running to keep up.

Pulling herself up to her full five feet two inches, Clara Morgan watched them go. And don't you be late!'

The exchange was so familiar it made her smile. She knew the boys would get distracted by something or other

on the way and end up running - with Mary six years younger and with legs much shorter - so they wouldn't be

late for school.As the three children disappeared out of sight, already laughing and shrieking at something, Clara

returned indoors, smiling.

Halfway down the lane,Tommy, Ralph and Mary were joined by the other children from the Bettws village who walked

this way to school.A whole gaggle of them walked together every day, having more fun on the way there and on the

way home than they ever did in the classroom.

It was two miles from Tommy's house to the school - two miles of empty lanes, hedgerows, ditches and fields.The

walk took about forty-five minutes and seemed always to be too brief.There were lots of distractions and things that

required investigation, especially in the spring when all the surrounding countryside that framed the walk burst

suddenly into life. Today was the first really hot day of the spring and Tommy and his friends seemed to have extra

energy as if fed directly by the sun. Soon the scarves and gloves that they had automatically brought with them were

Consigned to pockets and satchels.

Framed by hedges five feet tall, the children half walked, half chased each other down the lane, enjoying their

freedom to run about unchecked. Suddenly, a man jumped over the hedge to their right, landing In a crouch directly

in their midst. Mary shrieked as he stood up, towering above her.

'Excuse me! Sorry!' he shouted as he hared off down the lane Tommy clasped Mary's hand in comfort as he stared

after the strange man, who was still running full pelt down the lane, his coat tails flapping behind him.

'Who's he, then?' asked Ralph. All the children shook their heads. 'Never seen him before,' said Tommy. 'Maybe

he's -'

Mary yelped again as a second figure jumped over the hedge and landed with a far less graceful thud in the ditch. It

was the clog maker, Mr Wesley. He righted himself awkwardly and set off in pursuit of the stranger, wielding a

half-made clog in his right hand.

`What's going on?' asked Ralph in mystification.The children all looked to Tommy, who, at eleven, was the eldest

in the group. But he was as confused as the others appeared to be.

`Why's Mr Wesley chasing that man?' Ralph continued.

The group had stopped walking now, and stood together looking down the lane. In the distance they could hear the

clog maker shouting at the stranger, waving the clog dangerously. As they watched, the stranger jumped over the

hedge on the left, into a field of hay. The clog maker stopped running, looked at the hedge, looked down at his feet,

then shook his head and turned back towards the children, who stood gaping.

As the man approached, the children became nervous. He was an odd character - he worked on his own at the old

mill. His desire to work alone in such a deserted place marked him out as unusual and rather frightening.

There were very few dangers in the valley, but the children knew all the places and people to avoid - their parents

made sure of that. Mr Wesley was one such cantankerous old man that the children had been told to avoid.

The clog maker reached the children, breathing heavily and still clutching the half-made clog tightly. Mary

shrank back behind Tommy as he and Ralph stood at the front of the group.

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`Who was that man, then, Mr Wesley?' asked Tommy.

Mr Wesley glared at the boy and said nothing. Instead he took out a large, dirty handkerchief from his apron

pocket and mopped his brow.

Tommy and Ralph exchanged a glance.This was by far the most exciting thing that had happened on the way to school

for some time - how could they pass up the opportunity of finding out more?

`Go on!' whispered Ralph, just so Tommy could hear him.

`Mr Wesley,' prompted Tommy.

The clog maker glared at him again. 'You mind your own business,' he replied gruffly And don't talk to

strangers.And don't come anywhere near the mill - it's dangerous!'With that, he stomped off.

Òh,Tommy!èxclaimed Mary once Mr Wesley was safely out of earshot. `You shouldn't make him angry. You know

what Mam says about him'

`Well, he's gone now,' said Tommy, with a shrug of his shoulders. 'Come on, I'll race you to the next gate!'

This invitation relaxed the whole group - a return to normality `Ready, steady, go!' shouted Ralph, and they all

set off at varying paces, shouting to each other and laughing.

The next gate was only about twenty yards down the lane and Tommy

kept his eyes fixed on it as he ran. Reaching the gate, he slowed down to let his younger cousin `win' the race, then

clapped Ralph on the back. They turned and watched as the younger children kept running towards them.

'Excuse me,' said a soft voice atTommy's shoulder.Tommy jumped in the air and shouted out as he turned. Shocked

by Tommy's shout, Ralph did the same. They were face to face with the stranger Mr Wesley had been chasing. The

stranger's eyes seem to twinkle, catching the sunlight. He smiled broadly at the boys.

'Has he gone?' asked the stranger. 'Only I don't want to be clobbered with that clog and I've had enough running

for one day.'

The boys regarded the man dubiously. He seemed to be friendly but it was very unusual to see strangers in the

village. Despite the warm spring weather the man was dressed for deepest winter - long dark woollen trousers, a shirt

and waistcoat with a dark green velvet coat. He must have been roasting, yet he appeared unruffled by his recent

sprinting down the lane. His long wavy hair hung round his face like a girl's.

The other children reached the gate, but hung back, letting Tommy and Ralph handle the stranger

'Who are you?' asked Tommy, preferring his own question to answering the stranger's.

'I'm a visitor; replied the stranger.The children looked

nonplussed.The man stuck out his right hand towards Tommy, who

automatically shook it. 'Hello!' said the man I'm the Doctor.'

'I'm Tommy Morgan'

'And I'm Ralph Baker, Tommy's cousin,' put in Ralph. 'Why was Mr Wesley chasing you?'

The stranger looked thoughtful, creasing his brow. Then, suddenly, he smiled again and asked, 'Why do you think he was

chasing me?'

'Because you mustn't go near the mill. It's old and dangerous and my mam says Mr Wesley is meant to keep people

away; replied Ralph.

'Ah.Well, that explains it. I shouldn't have gone near the mill,' replied the Doctor. "that's all.'

The children fell over themselves to explain who they were. The Doctor, however, seemed distracted. He looked up

and down the lane. then very closely at the clothes the children were wearing - V-neck Woollen jerseys and short

trousers. 'What year is this,Tommy?'

'1928; replied Tommy.•'Why? Don't you know?'

'Just testing; said the Doctor. 'And now you, Mary - where are we?'

'In the lane,' said Mary shyly. The other children shrieked and laughed. 'That's not what he means!' cried Ralph. 'We're in

Crickhowell - well,

pearly. We're almost at school now, and that's in Aber.'

'Good, so you know the area,' said the Doctor. He delved into his coat

pocket to find a strange contraption that looked not unlike a

crystal set. It bleeped and flashed as he held it at

arm's length, turning a complete circle. He stopped when the bleeping and flashing reached its peak, with his back to

the children, who stood agog.

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`What's in this direction?' he asked.

`Nothing except the bog; said Tommy.Àha

! Well, that's where I'm going.Thank you for your help Have a nice day at school. Goodbye!' The Doctor set off in

the direction of the bog. `Hey, wait a minute!' called Tommy. 'The bog's dangerous'

`We're not allowed to go there; added Ralph.

Ì'm not asking you to go with me,' said the DoctorÌ thought you were going to school:

Tommy and Ralph exchanged a naughty grin, then turned to one of the other boys and made him promise to get

Mary and the others to school. While he led the remaining children down the lane, running to make up for lost

time,Tommy and Ralph ran across the hay field after the Doctor.

The two boys fell into step alongside the Doctor and tried to match his long, purposeful strides.They were bursting

with questions, but were still cautious enough to be wary of a stranger.

`You're not from round here, are you?' asked Tommy. 'You're English: `Well,' began the DoctorÌ'm certainly not

from Wales:

This line of questioning having achieved nothing, Tommy tried a different tack. 'What's that for?' He pointed

at the Doctor's gadget, which was still bleeping and flashing

furiously.

The Doctor seemed to consider, then stopped walking and put an arm round each of the boys' shoulders. I think I

can trust you two to keep a secret,' he said. This is a special device for tracking someone who is very lost:

`Who?' asked Ralph, reasonably

Ì don't know until we find them,' was the reply.

The boys exchanged a puzzled look, as the Doctor gave them a broad smile and then pressed on across the field.

They followed, sensing the excitement of adventure ahead, the excitement of doing something other than scrumping

or bird-watching instead of going to school, an excitement that seemed somehow to exude straight from the

Doctor.

`But,' the Doctor continued, 'whoever it is, he or she is also not likely to be local. In fact, it's likely to be an alien' He

looked over his shoulder at the boys and then, with a wink, added, `Just like me!'

Ralph looked at Tommy. `What does he mean?'

Tommy, a voracious reader who had enjoyed H. G. Wells's *The First Men*

***in the Moon,* was wide-eyed with excitement. 'He's from another planet!'**

Ralph roared with laughter: the idea was clearly ridiculous to him

Tommy looked to the Doctor for reassurance, and he nodded his confirmation that Tommy was right. Although all

Ralph's curiosity had been replaced with merriment,Tommy's was replaced with awe and, if he were honest, fear.They were

heading to the bog, the one place they were absolutely forbidden

to go, with a total stranger who claimed to be an alien.

The Doctor cut into Ralph's laughter as the bog came into sight. 'Yes: he said, 'not a very appealing place:The Doctor's

cheery face took on a more serious look as he studied the area carefully.

The bog was a large marshy area, which began with puddles and sticky mud and led to an expanse of wet, muddy land that

looked as if it might swallow people whole. The area was dotted with patches of sedge and dumps of willows and aspens.

The trees formed a dark canopy over the treacherous ground. All three walkers stopped, pondering the way forward.

Turning ninety degrees to the right, the Doctor carried on round the edge of the bog, still holding his flashing gadget

out in front of him, striding energetically as if he somehow knew where it was safe to walk.

Ralph stopped laughing and shot a worried look to his cousin. 'We shouldn't be here, Tommy. It's dangerous. And we

don't really know who this stranger is. Our mams'll have us.'

`Windy!' said Tommy.

Ì'm not scared!' retorted Ralph quickly. But neither boy moved.

The Doctor trod carefully round the bog, testing each foothold and taking care not to slip. The signal was so strong now

that he could do without the tracker, so he returned it to his pocket. He wondered about the wisdom of having two

young boys in tow. It was too late now, of course, to send them to school - they wouldn't go. The Doctor hoped that

whatever he found in the area was not too unpalatable for children.

He had picked up th23

e distress call about an hour ago, while travelling in the vortex, and had made an emergency landing as

near as he could to the source, namely the disused mill. In some ways it was an advantage that whoever - or whatever - had

crash-landed in the middle of nowhere in the 1920s, as there were likely to be few witnesses. In other ways, being a

stranger in a tight-knit rural community in the 1920s had its own problems. The plan was to pick up whoever sent the

distress call and leave as quickly as possible. This plan had already gone wrong in two Important respects - first, the

Doctor had been seen and then seen off by the clog maker, and second, two young children were now involved.

The Doctor sighed. Why did things always have to be complicated?

The boys followed the Doctor's progress only with their eyes, too scared by their parents' repeated warnings to stay

away from the bog to venture further. In fact, the thought of their mothers' wrath when it was discovered that they'd

been anywhere near the bog was probably even more frightening than the bog itself.Àha

! Found it!' shouted the Doctor.

Their fears forgotten with sudden excitement, Tommy and Ralph walked to join the Doctor as quickly as they could,

watching where they put their feet. As they approached, the Doctor turned to face them and held out his hands in a gesture

that made them stop walking. Behind him, they could see a glistening shape about the size of a tractor wheel.

Ì meant what I said earlier; he said. 'I'm not from your planet and neither is the person I've come to rescue. Are you

sure you want to see?'

Ralph looked at Tommy nervously.Tommy bit his lip, trying to be

brave. `Yes, we want to help, too,' said Tommy at last.

The boys joined the Doctor and looked at the object stuck in the bog. It looked like a giant blackbird's egg; a

shimmering, fragile pale blue globe. As they watched, the bog slurped and the egg shape sank a few inches.

Ìt's going down fast,' said the Doctor. 'We'll have to get the occupants out straightaway.' He touched a strangely mottled

piece of the 'egg' and a section of the surface slid away to reveal a dimly lit interior. Inside the cramped space sat a strange

creature, the same shimmering blue colour as the craft, and not much bigger than Tommy and Ralph. It looked like a gawky,

skinny child.The creature was slumped over a bank of controls, all of them dead.

Tommy and Ralph gaped at the creature. Suddenly, it moved - raised its pale blue, hairless head, and made a soft keening

noise like a kitten.

As the boys watched, gradually plucking up the courage to move closer, the Doctor leant into the craft and spoke in

reassuring tones to the creature. He took off his coat and wrapped it round the spindly shape, then, very gently, he

reached in and lifted the creature out of the craft, placing it carefully away from the boggy ground

`What is it?' asked Tommy in amazement.

`He's a Velderon,' said the Doctor. A badly injured Velderon at that' Trying to be as brave as Tommy, Ralph asked,`Should

we take him to see Doctor Wil iarns ?'

Ì'm afraid your medicine won't be able to help him,' replied the Doctor. `But if we can get him back to my ship, at the mill,

then I can get help for him somewhere else. What worries me is that there is room in the c

for two passengers - one is missing' He looked anxious, cast his eyes p to the sky, then over at the creature wrapped in

his coat, then at Tommy and Ralph. 'Now, give me a hand, you two'

The Doctor indicated that they should help him push the Velderon craft

into the bogÌt's all right,' said the Doctor, as they all heaved at the giant

egg. 'It's a biodegradable material and won't harm the local ecostructure'

This meant nothing to the boys, but they were too busy pushing and trying not to get caught in the bog themselves to

reply.

And the bog neatly hides the evidence that the craft was here at all,' continued the Doctor.

With a slow sucking noise, the craft disappeared from sight completely, leaving no trace. Ralph and Tommy took a quick step

back, afraid that all they had heard about the bog was true - who knew what else was hidden there?

The Doctor picked up the bundle of his coat and started back towards the fields in the direction of the lane. All but the

Velderon's feet was covered.The tiny blue feet hung limply, looking like a doll's.

Walking carefully, trying not to alarm the injured Velderon any further, the Doctor took the chance to explain to the boys`This

chap had some sort of trouble on his ship, boarded the escape capsule - like a lifeboat, if you like - and then sent a distress

call. I picked up his message and came to help:

How much more sh 2

o 5

uld he tell them? Young minds are flexible and can cope with unusual and new ideas, but can also be

easily disturbed with fear.

'The problem is,' he continued carefully, 'that the Velderons don't like water, and if they touch water it can hurt them or

anyone they touch."This was as far as he would go. There was no reason to explain in full the nature of the Velderons'

active acidic skin. But the worry about the possibility of rain was not as bad as the worry that the escape pod was Clearly

from a fighting ship, and that meant that the Velderons were probably waiting for the two crew members to check in. The

race was notoriously warlike and it was more than possible that a second, less friendly Velderon ship could be on the way

to check up on their missing Colleagues.And that would certainly spell disaster for the locals and much 01 the surrounding

countryside if the Velderons had their way. The boys didn't need to know this.

'So long as we get this chap back to the TARDIS before it rains, everything will be -'

A terrible, high-pitched scream broke through the Doctor's speech, Stopping the whole group in its tracks.

'It came from over there,' said Tommy, pointing across to the nearest bodge, which backed onto a small track leading to a

farm.

'Take this, said the Doctor quickly, passing the coat and Velderon bundle o Ralph, who took it in ginger astonishment.

The Doctor andTommy raced to the hedge and leapt over it into the track. A middle-aged woman stood there,

shaking with fear, eyes wide. She started and let out another cry as the Doctor and Tommy landed beside her.

Ìt's all right, Mrs...'

Jones,' said Tommy, as the woman looked wildly about. Now he really *was* in for it - if the Minister's wife knew he

was skipping school, his main would know within the hour.

`Which way did it go?' asked the Doctor urgently somehow contriving to look sympathetic and anxious

simultaneously.

Mrs Jones gestured to her right, towards the farm, and the Doctor set off at a run Tommy followed him, leaving Mrs

Jones to gather her wits alone.

Ralph held the Velderon tenderly, as if it were a sick animal. Although the creature was roughly the same size as Ralph, it

seemed to weigh very little and felt very fragile. The Velderon shifted inside the Doctor's coat and made the same sad

keening noise that it had made before. Ralph's dad had let him rear a poorly lamb the previous spring and now Ralph

felt all the fear of this strange alien dissolve into concern. He spoke soothingly and rocked the bundle gently.

A drop of rain splashed onto Ralph's hand and he remembered with horror what the Doctor had said about the

creature getting wet. Trying not to disturb the Velderon, Ralph carefully took his scarf from his pocket and wrapped

it round the little blue feet that protruded from the Doctor's coat. Satisfied with this solution, Ralph stood in the

showery rain.

After a while, with no sign of the Doctor and Tommy, Ralph decided to walk slowly towards the mill. He walked

steadily and gently, singing a lullaby that his mam used to sing to him when he was younger. He had sung this to the

lamb last year and it had seemed to help. Ralph could see no

reason why the same method shouldn't help restore the

Velderon to health.

Tommy and the Doctor ran down the track.

Ìt can't have got far;' shouted the Doctor over his shoulder.

Ìs it another alien?' shouted Tommy between breaths.

The Doctor contrived to nod while running. Ì had a feeling there might be another Velderon, as those escape pods

carry two'

Tommy could muster no breath to reply. How could the Doctor talk so levelly while running so fast? He

concentrated on trying to keep up.

They rounded a corner and could see the track stretching away, only a few feet wide but a good hundred yards

long, with the Bettws farm buildings in sight at the end. The Doctor slowed and stopped. Tommy almost ran right

into the back of him.

'It can't have got that far in so short a time: said the Doctor. Then he held out the palm of his hand, palm

upwards.

Tommy did the same. 'It's raining'

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'Yes,' said the Doctor, the anxious look returning to his face. 'I hope Ralph's all right:

Tommy felt scared again. Ralph was his best friend. He felt a terrible sick keling in his stomach. 'What shall we do?' he

asked in a small voice.

'Our priority must be to *fmd* the second Velderon,' said the Doctor after a moment's thoughtÌf we don't and if

this rain sets in, we could be in for a lot worse than a few frightened locals:A short distance down the track there

was a stile leading onto a footpath. 'Let's try down there,' he said.

Tommy followed the Doctor towards the stile, the sick feeling churning round in his stomach, his hands feeling warm

and clammy.This adventure was turning out not to be so much fun after all.

Ralph had reached the lane, where today's strange adventure had started. He knew the way to the mill - he and

Tommy had often gone as close as they dared and watched Mr Wesley making his clogs. It wasn't very Interesting,

but the place was prohibited and that made it exciting. There was a small gap in the hedge that led into a field of

mangelwurzels. He squeezed through slowly, taking care not to catch the precious alien bundle on the sharp spikes

of hawthorn that stuck through the hedge. He Was halfway through, negotiating a particularly vicious thorn, when he

beard a voice behind him

'What's going on here?' It was George Evans-the-Cwm. A local hired hand, he seemed to spend much of his time

creeping quietly along hedges to check snares, poaching. A man of low cunning, he was always guaranteed to

turn up when you least expected him.

Ralph lowered the Velderon to the ground on the far side of the hedge and manoeuvred his way back into the lane.

There stood Evans, his long walking stick in one hand and two dead rabbits slung over his shoulder. His CM pockets

bulged with snares and other things that Ralph didn't like to think about. What would such a man do if he found the

injured Velderon? KW it without a second thought, perhaps. Ralph had to get rid of him.

'Oh, hello, Mr Evans: Ralph began, blocking the man's view through the bole in the hedge with his body.

'What are you up to?' asked the poacher suspiciously.

'Just taking a short cut: said Ralph evasively.

This didn't fool Evans. 'What have you got through there?' he said, maturing behind Ralph.

'Nothing, said Ralph. Why wouldn't the man just go away?

Evans was taller than the boy and could see through the gaps in the hedge. He took his walking stick and prodded the

forked end - used for

pinning snared rabbits to the ground - through the hedge towards the velvet bundle, and the injured Velderon.

'All right!' said Ralph, desperately. 'It's a blackbird. It's got a broken wing and I'm looking after it:This was the best

he could do. It seemed to do the trick. Evans stopped poking with his stick and looked him in the eye.

`What's the point in that? May as well put it out of its misery'

This was enough to galvanise Ralph into action`You leave it alone!' he cried, pushing his way frantically through the

hedge, not caring about the thorns. He picked up the Velderon and ran along the edge of the mangelwurzel field.

Evans shook his stick at Ralph's receding form:You should be in school, Ralph Baker!' he shouted. But Ralph was far

enough away now to stop panicking and slow down.

Tommy jumped down from the stile and stopped in his tracks.The second Velderon was only twenty feet away. The

Doctor stood slightly ahead of Tommy, holding his hands forward in a friendly gesture.

`Please don't be afraid,' said the Doctor. We want to help. We won't hurt you:

The Velderon backed away, limping. It clutched one spindly arm to its midriff, where a purple stain showed through

its tiny forgers.

It's hurt,' said Tommy.

'Yes, but that injury may heal: said the Doctor quietly. 'I'm more worried about this rain'

The Velderon let out a mewling cry as rain splashed on its shoulders and arms. Where the raindrops hit the Velderon

its skin seemed to steam, making a hissing noise like a whistling kettle coming to the boil.

Ì know you're hurt; continued the Doctor, addressing the Velderon. Ànd that you're confused and frightened. We

have taken your friend to a safe place: The Doctor took a few steps forward, but the alien was scared. It hobbled

backwards and let o 28

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t a screech of pain and fear.

A few feet behind the Velderon stood Farmer Pritchard's well.There was no running water at the Bettws farm and

the well was Pritchard's only water supply. From the Doctor's reactions, the same thought Tommy now had must

have occurred to him too.

`Stop!' called Tommy, stepping forward.

The Velderon hesitated, then howled as more skin hissed and steamed in the increasing rain.

Tommy coughed as the steam caught in his throat. 'Watch out,'he spluttered. Doctor - the well!'

`Keep back from the gas!' shouted the Doctor, as he moved

forward quickly, taking off his waistcoat and trying to

reach the Velderon.

Tommy watched as, with another screech, the frightened alien lurched

backwards, away from the Doctor, and toppled almost daintily at the edge of the well.The Doctor's eyes were wide

with horror.

`No!' cried Tommy.

`Run, Tommy4' shouted the Doctor, his last desperate lunge for the creature failing, as it plunged backwards into

the well.

Tommy ran as fast as he could away from the well, grimacing as he heard the Velderon scream. Then, with a

distant splash, the unfortunate creature hit the water.

`Get down and hold your breath!' yelled the Doctor, sweeping Tommy to the ground as an explosion of acidic gas

erupted from the well.

Tommy held his hands over his ears and shut his eyes tightly, feeling tears squeeze their way through nonetheless.

Before he could gather his wits, the Doctor had yanked him up by his coat and pushed him on.

`Keep running,' he gasped. 'And don't stop until I say so.'

Tommy ran, tears streaming down his face, and he knew it wasn't the gas that was making him cry.

Ralph had reached the den from which he and Tommy usually watched Mr Wesley. He settled here, out of sight of

the bad-tempered old man, to wait for the others.A pang of hunger prompted him to delve in his satchel for his

packed lunch. Contemplating his sandwiches and his apple, he

wondered if the Velderon was hungry, too. Would it

prefer the cheese sandwich or the jam sandwich? The jam was Ralph's mam's blackberry and apple - it might be

too sweet for someone who was poorly. The cheese was from Pritchard's dairy and had a strong salty taste.

Ralph propped up the Velderon on his knee and broke off a small piece of cheese sandwich.

Àre you hungry, mister?' he asked.

The Velderon's eyes opened briefly, looking straight at Ralph.The alien's thin mouth opened a fraction and Ralph

popped the morsel of sandwich in. Ralph took a mouthful of sandwich himself, and smiled at the creature In his

charge. It wasn't so different from the sick lamb, really.

The Doctor joined Tommy on the Bettws farm track and put a comforting arm round the boy's shoulder. The last thing the

Doctor had wanted was to upset the children.

He knew this had been a risk from the beginning, but he hadn't thought things would get so dangerous. Now it was too late

and this young boy was crying and afraid. But there was no time to mourn the unfortunate Velderon - if the second alien

was not able to contact the main fleet very soon, it could mean a full-scale invasion. Despite the urgency racing through

him, the Doctor knew he could not tell Tommy the full nature of We danger they were in. It wouldn't help

`Come on, said the Doctor gently but somewhat awkwardly. 'Let's go and find Ralph.'

The pair walked in silence until they reached the place where they had left Ralph with the other Velderon.There

was no sign of him.

`Perhaps he's gone on ahead; ventured the Doctor.Then, trying to

boost his young companion's spirits, he added,

'Yes, he seemed like a very brave and sensible boy - I'm sure he's gone on and is just waiting for us to catch him up'

`You think so?' asked Tommy, wiping the last few tears from his face. Àbsolutely; said the Doctor. 'You know the

way - lead on!'

Tommy brightened a little. Ì know where Ralph'll be,' he said `We've got a den near the old mill.'

The Doctor smiled. Excellent. What's the quickest way?'

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Ten minutes later the Doctor and Tommy could see the den ahead of them. The den was a natural dip in the land

behind a thick hedge - the boys used this as a meeting place and to look down the valley at the disused mill. The

bottom of the hedge had plenty gaps to look through and the clog maker never saw them.

As the pair approached, they could see Ralph and the Velderon curled up inside the den. Ralph saw them and

waved, smiling broadly.Tommy ran forward and gave his cousin a hug Tommy's dirty, tear-stained face lit up with

delight that Ralph was all right.

`What happened to you?' asked Ralph.

The Doctor joined the boys and the Velderon in the denÌ'm afraid we lost the other Velderon,' he said. His face,

sad and serious, told Ralph what he meant.

Tommy just nodded.

`Well, this one's had half my cheese sandwich!' said Ralph.

`Has he?' asked the Doctor in surprise. 'I think it's time we got him home, don't you?'

The Doctor peered through the hedge, viewing the layout of the valley below.

"That clog maker is by the stream: said the Doctor, 'but he's got back to the mill' He turned to the boys and

drawing them into a huddle, as if discussing the best strategy for a game of Cowboys and Indians`There's only one

chance. I'll cause a diversion while you two get the Velderon into the mill'

`Can we wait a bit?' asked Tommy, still catching his breath from his run to the den.

Ì'm afraid not; said the Doctor, looking anxiously at the sky. Ìt's not raining anymore; said Ralph.

Ah, no, no, it isn't, you're right,' said the Doctor. Then as if his mood

changed with the wind, he smiled and continued. 'But better safe than sorry, don't you think? The sooner we can

get the Velderon some medical attention the better.'

The boys nodded and clambered to their feet, supporting the coat-swaddled alien between them

`Ready?' asked the Doctor`Then let's go.' He ducked out of the den and headed to the right, singing 'Mae hen wlad

fy nhadau' at the top of his voice.

Ralph and Tommy looked up in surprise that the Doctor knew their national anthem. They headed down the

valley to the left, trying to keep out of Wesley's line of sight.The ground was uneven and they had to take care not to

tumble over. Going as quickly as they could, they took turns to carry the Velderon, still wrapped in the Doctor's coat

and Ralph's scarf. Another fifty yards and they'd be in the mill.

Mr Wesley started from his work, annoyed. Who was making that racket? Then he saw the same stranger that he'd

chased off only that morning.

`You again!' he roared, rising from his stool and reaching for his hammerÌ told you to stay away from here!'

`So you did,' said the stranger cheerily. `But I couldn't resist another look: He casually picked up three discarded

lumps of wood and began to juggle with them 'Tell me, do you come here often?'

`Look, bow, growled the enraged clog maker. 'I don't know who you are, but I've had enough of you getting

under my feet: He advanced, but then something caught the corner of his eye. He looked round.

Tommy Morgan and Ralph Baker were right outside the mill, trying to get the rusty hinges of the door to move

enough to let them in.

Realising he had been deliberately fooled, Wesley didn't know who to shout at next. He looked between the boys and

the stranger, and quickly decided the boys' safety was more important than whatever the stranger was up to. He ran

towards the mill.

`Don't you go in there!' he shouted.Then the ground suddenly swooped towards him as he was hit with a low rugby

tackle from the stranger, knocking the wind from his lungs.

`Sorry!' he gasped apologetically as he pulled himself to his feet and hurtled towards the mill.

Wesley raised his head to see the ridiculous stranger in his fancy get-up help Tommy and Ralph to heave open the

door to the mill and dash inside.

The Doctor jammed the door shut and hurried over to a large blue box that stood in the shadows.

'I'm sorry, boys, but I think that it would be best for me to make a

quick getaway.' He gestured towards the box. "This

is my ship.'

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After today's events,Tommy and Ralph were prepared to accept this, no matter how fantastic it seemed.

`May I take the Velderon?' asked the Doctor.

Ralph gently handed over the bundle he had looked after so carefully. The Velderon stirred and moved the Doctor's

coat back so that its face was revealed. The alien reached down with one spindly hand and removed Ralph's scarf

from its feet. Then, looking Ralph in the eye, the Velderon held the scarf out. Ralph took it and smiled. The Velderon

smiled back.

`Goodbye,' said Ralph.

`Yes, goodbye,' said the Doctor. 'Sorry I have to leave you with all the explanations. Thank you for all your help.' He

seemed desperate to get going, almost hopping from foot to foot.

*Goodbye, Doctor,' saidTommy, relieved that the danger was mostly over now. 111 never forget today'

`Neither will I,' replied the Doctor, his eyes sombre, but his smile showing relief. And with that, he went inside the

dark blue box. Shortly afterward, the box made a terrible noise like an elephant and slowly disappeared, right in

front of the boys' eyes.

Ralph and Tommy looked from each other to the space where the box had been, then back to each other.

Outside, Wesley was raving. 'You wait till I tell your dad where you've been, Tommy Morgan! Leading young Ralph

astray!'

Brought to their senses by the clog maker's shouting, they made for the other side of the mill, where they could see a

broken plank in the wall. With a little effort they made a gap big enough to squeeze through, then they ran for all

they were worth.

Back in the lane once more, Tommy and Ralph stood panting, gathering their thoughts and catching their breath. In

the distance they heard the school bell.They had missed the entire day of school.

`You know hell tell our mams where we've been,' said Ralph, nodding back in the direction of the mill.

And Mrs Jones: said Tommy. 'She saw me and the Doctor near the Bettws

And Evans-the-Cwm: added Ralph.

The boys looked at each other, *then* laughed. What a day of adventure they had had!

`Race you back to my house!' shouted Tommy, and off they went.

Clara Morgan stood on the doorstep, watching the two boys approach. Of course, she already knew that they had

skipped school.

`Mam, Mam!' called Tommy as he and his cousin ran the last stretch. `You'll *never guess what* we did today!'

'We met a man from another planet!' said Ralph excitedly, out of breath. Tommy, his face filthy, continued. And we

helped to rescue an alien!' Ànd it borrowed my scarf and smiled at me!'

And its friend fell down Pritchard's well and exploded!'

Clara regarded the two boys. They had such vivid imaginations and were so full of life. She could never remain

angry with them for long. They'd get their comeuppance for truanting from the school teacher tomorrow.

`Fancy!' she said, with a smile.

All Done With Mirrors

Christopher Bay

The Doctor was singing to himself, not without a certain brio, in one of the anterooms that led off of the main control

chamber of the TARDIS. Well, not so much singing, morèbom-bowing', interspersing the orchestral `boors' with the

odd 'fa la la', 'dee dee dee' and 'fiddly-pushbrom-pom-pom'. It was fair to say he was in a good mood.

Midway through the vocal festivities, Sarah Jane awoke in another of the rooms. By contrast, her mood was unmistakeably

bad. She had drifted off to sleep just after she had put her curling tongs to heat up, two hours ago.

Her small, prettily decorated room with its shrinelike tidiness, now began to smell quite horribly of burning plastic.The

tongs, in an unusual d333i5splay of volition, had escaped their casing and fallen to the base of Sarah's bedside table lamp. She

was further irritated because she actually considered the curling tongs to be a waste of time in the first place. Some girls just

didn't have that kind of hair. She wasn't trying to impress anyone, certainly not the Doctor. He would only notice

Sarah's appearance if she were wearing, say, a flashing hat or had an enormous gash across the whole of her face, and

even then the recognition would not be immediate.

No, Sarah liked upon occasion to dress up or make herself look beautiful just for her own sake: to remind herself that

she was still human. Still a woman.

The fantastical pseudo-timpani suite grew suddenly louder as the Doctor opened the control room door. Sarah

could hear him flicking twitches and adjusting dials. Although it had been his tones which had woken her, she now found

herself listening to his antics with an amused half smile. She ventured out in her jumper and jeans.

Àh! There you are; said the Doctor, looping his scarf around his neck a couple of times. He saw Sarah's half smile and

upped the ante by raising her a full one.

`You seem in high spirits today, Doctor,' said Sarah.

'Do I? Yes, I do, don't I? Yes. Well done!' answered the Doctor, his gaze still constant.

Àre you going to tell me why?' Sarah asked without impatience. Òh! Why? Yes, of course. Didn't I say?'

`You know you didn't.'

Ì don't know anything of the -'

`Doctor!' Sarah interrupted 'You're giving me a headache'

`What?' scoffed the Doctor. 'You can't blame that on me, Sarah Jane. If you're going to experiment with alchemy

you should wear a mask'

Sarah felt extremely confused and squinted at him.

`Your room. The Doctor gestured to the door behind her 'I can smell burning metal - ghastly odour.'

Sarah tutted and sighed. 'Plastic! It's my curling tongs. I left them on by mistake and they fell on to my reading lamp.

Sorry, nothing to do with alchemy:

`Well, I'm very glad to hear it,' the Doctor said reassuringly, moving around the console and setting yet more dials.

'Terrific play though, *The Alchemist.* Ben Jonson. Looks a lot like

me according to some. Hope I don't get mistaken

for him, they might have me up for murder'

Sarah put both her hands to her head and squeezed two fistfuls of her dark brown hair in frustration.

`Why would anyone mistake you for him? What are you talking about?' `Well, it could happen where we're

going,' smiled the Doctor in expectation of her response.

After a moment, Sarah said, 'We're actually going somewhere at last? Where?'

Ì thought I'd take you to the theatre, Sarah Jane.'

She took a sharp intake of breath and then laughed. Òh, Doctor! That's wonderful. How lovely. What are we going to

see?'

The Doctor stopped smiling and looked blank for a second. 'I'm not sure,' he said.

'Oh,' replied Sarah, still hanging on to her excitement.

Ìt's not as simple as that.The way the TARDIS has been behaving of late it could be anything and anywhere. Well,

the Doctor corrected himself, ànywhere within the parameters of this planet anyway.'

Ì see'

`Well, don't stand there looking concerned. I'll take care of the physics and you can get back to the alchemy.'

Sarah rolled her eyes and, smiling, headed back into her room_

As the reddening late afternoon sun continued its slow downward arc towards the horizon, the South Bank of the

river Thames was in the ascendancy. The raucous bustle of street traders, thieves, coney-catchers and loiterers

created a wall of noise.Along this stretch, and in amongst the

pulsating swarm of ill-fashioned bodies, stood a number of

entertainment houses used for either bear-baiting or theatrical performances.

In one such place, known as The Rose, the audience was captivated by a character called Bajazeth who, after having

suffered much disgrace and humiliation, looked as though he was about to do something unspeakable to himself.

`Now, Bajazeth,' he cried to himself, moving to the centre of the cage in which he had been imprisoned and raising his fist.

'Abridge thy baneful 37days, and beat thy brains out of thy conquered head' Some cheered and some clasped their hands

over their mouths - they seemed to know what was coming. 'Let the stony dart of senseless cold pierce through the

centre of my withered heart; he continued in his hysterical rage, 'and make a passage for my loathed life! And with that,

he gripped onto the sturdy bars of the cage, threw back his neck and smashed his forehead, then the centre of his face,

then the top of his head as if he were a bull, hard against those bars. Blood poured from the head, nose, ears and eyes of

the once mighty Bajazeth and the audience emitted an enormous, violent sound.

Just as the distorted cacophony of screams and yells seemed to pass its zenith, another, this time distinctly different cry

went up. It seemed big enough to fill a city and sounded frightening even to those who wittingly or otherwise conspired in

its creation.

Bajazeth's wife, Zabina, was next to speak and duly uttered, 'What do mine eyes behold?' But the young boy playing the

female role had never said it with such conviction, and he never would again. He remembered the line not because he

was concentrating on the script but because it was almost exactly what he would have said anyway in response to the

amazing blue boxlike apparition on the upstage centre mark. The groundlings were going crazy, some of them actually

in tears.

A few of the more inebriated members of the audience - and most of them were a bit tipsy - simply pointed and nodded

solemnly while others looked extremely grave and either applauded slowly and fearfully or not at all. Bajazeth wiped the

fake blood from his eyes and lips and stood up looking aghast, and in his silent incomprehension vaguely heard someone in

the seats shout, `Do you see that? Do you see that? That Marlowe's a bloody genius'

The TARDIS landed with its customary jolt.

'You never get any better at that, do you, Doctor?' remarked Sarah picking herself up off the floor.

'It's not me, S.J.; he replied with a guiltless stare. 'It's the ground.' 'I've told you - don't call me that!'

The Doctor wandered over to the console and hovered his finger over the button for the monitor. 'Let's have a look,

shall we, hmm'

Sarah felt immediately ill at ease when a selection of odd faces appeared on the screen, seemingly peering in at her.

'Oh, dear,' said the Doctor, looking concerned. This can't be right' 'What's wrong? Did you make a mistake with the co-

ordinates?'

'Well, I suppose it's possible. But I'm pretty sure I entered them

correctly. I was aiming for sixteenth-century London but by the looks of this lot, we're somewhere in the Middle

East around two hundred years too early'

They look terrifying, Doctor: said Sarah almost afraid to go too near the

monitor lest a warlike hand reach in and do something unseemly to her. `They're certainly dressed for mischief but I

wouldn't say... wait... 'The

Doctor studied the screen:Get out of the way' He gestured at the monitor. `What is it?'

Ìf that idiot with the enormous helmet moves again... there, see?'The Doctor beamed at the screen, beamed at

Sarah and then back at the screen again. Sure enough, when the warrior moved to one side Sarah could see a

large number of differently dressed people behind him, many of them applauding.

The Doctor put his hands deep into his pockets. I think I've made an impression on them, what do you think?'

Sarah Jane took a while to catch on, but then she moved away from the monitor and began puffing up her hair. The

Doctor smiled at her - no further explanation was necessary.

`My goodness, we're on stage,' Sarah whispered, trembling.

`Don't worry, they can't see you or hear you: he replied. Ha! I've always had a flair for the dramatic,' he said, more

to himself and the monitor than to Sarah. 'Perhaps I should venture out and give a soliloquy. You may not be aware

of this but I am an enormous fan of the theatre: He patted his chest. 'It's always been dose to my hearts. I wonder

what play this is... costumes from the fourteenth century -'

`Shouldn't we get off the stage?' Sarah interrupted, somewhat edgily. Won't they get suspicious?'

'Suspicious? No, no, I doubt it. No, Sarah, they'll merely think it's some kind of ingenious theatrical trick.' The

Doctor turned once more to the monitor. 'They're probably expecting God to come out: he continued really rather

amused at himself. 'I could play Him very well, don't you think?' Sarah rolled her eyes as he added, 'It'll all make

sense... *deus ex machina:*

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`What? You? A sex machine?'

The Doctor looked her up and down, shocked. 'Good lord, Sarah!' He shifted tone from exasperation to explanation.

***'Deus ex machina?'* Sarah shrugged.**

`God from machine: the Doctor went on. All the rage in the classics: His grin and enthusiasm began to fade. `No,

you're probably right,' he said as the general consternation on the monitor caught his attention. `The actors aren't

going with it'

A couple of minutes later, after a short TARDIS trip in space if not time,

the Doctor and Sarah emerged from a timber store along Deptford Strand on the river front. It was enormous enough to

stash the TARDIS without calling any attention to it - for the time being anyway. Much of the timber had made its way into

Sarah's hair and onto her clothing, which now matched the Doctor's in that it was drab, odorous and lifted from a room

inside the timber sheds. She was beginning to give up on the whole appearance issue.

'Is that your idea of sprucing yourself up?' the Doctor joked, tickled.

She had smeared a little grease on her cheeks and chin and her hair was a terrible mess, as if it had been pulled through

a selection of hedges backwards. Her eyes were covered for the most part by her forelocks and, as it was getting fortunately

more and more dark, she would pass quite adequately for a boy.

Sarah was captivated by the sight of Deptford almost four hundred years before she had first seen it. 'It's so strange,'

she remarked. 'London looks like some little country port.

`How can you tell, Sarah?' smiled the Doctor. `This is Kent.'

`But Deptford's in London, everyone knows that'

Not now it isn't.This is the country, my dear Sarah.'The Doctor pointed across the river. That's the Isle of Dogs -' he

turned to point down river - 'and there lies Greenwich. See the turrets of the palace?'

Okay: nodded Sarah`My bearings are sort of intact but I can't get used to Deptford not being in London. But wherever

it is, it stinks to high heaven'

`What? Well, of course it stinks. We're next to the Thames. It's an enormous lavatory.'

`But it doesn't smell like this in my time'

Well, they had to do something about it eventually, but if we get stuck here you'll have to get used to it. It didn't get

cleaned up until the reign of Victoria. So imagine, if you will, another two hundred and fifty years of human waste on top of

this:

`Revolting:

`Ha! It's certainly not what you Earth-dwellers refer to as nice, I grant you.'

After a good hour's walk under a thickening cover of darkness, the Doctor and Sarah Jane arrived on Bankside.They soon

found the theatre in which they had earlier made their cameo

appearance.

`How are we going to get in?' asked Sarah.The Doctor shushed her, and nodded at three men having a conversation next to a

door that led into The Rose. Their words were imperceptible, only intermittent whispering Was audible. After a few

moments, the door was opened from the inside and the three men entered purposefully.

`They've left the door unlocked: The Doctor smiled a toothy grin and made a move to follow. Sarah put a hand on

his arm.

`Doctor, this looks dangerous. We're supposed to be here to enjoy ourselves, we don't want to get into any

trouble:

'Indeed, Sarah, but I imagine that dean clothes are something you would very much like to get into. Come on.'

The Doctor took a brief survey of the area and walked towards the door.

Inside, the three men were nowhere to be seen. In fact, Sarah and the Doctor could see very little at all. What

scant illumination remained outside made rather ineffectual headway through the small, squared windows of this

silent room. The shape of the room at least was visible, and the Doctor carefully edged towards the far side. His

hands reached out to find a large arms which they had previously believed to be a wall. He pulled it to one side and

discovered another room. It was the tiring house, the little building at the back of the stage from where many actors

made their entrances, exits and costume changes. The Doctor stayed where he was and listened.They could now

hear the voices again, coming from the other side of the wooden doors that led directly onto the stage.

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`What are we going to do, Doctor?' panicked Sarah.

`Ssssh! Keep your voice down, we're standing behind the arras which is a very precarious place to be in the

Renaissance:

Sarah heard a scuttling sound by the side wall and she jumped_ A rat!' smiled the Doctor. 'How perfect:

`Doctor, please. We shouldn't be here:

Aren't you the slightest bit curious to find out why these gentlemen are here, and why, if they are permitted to be

here, they are whispering?' He didn't wait for an answer. 'Be very quiet; he said and led Sarah to the far side of the

tiring house where there was an enormous selection of costumes and props. The Doctor selected appropriate

garments and began to fashion himself accordingly

Àt least now if we get caught there will be fewer questions,' he whispered, apparently very pleased with his

choice of doublet with golden buttons all the way down his large padded sleeves. The tangerine lining could be seen

beneath the covering black velvet where the tailor had made eccentric yet sartorial slashes.

The Doctor seemed to decide against the ruff and just let the linen shirt that he had also put on remain visible, the

collar of it falling over the neck of the doublet. `No, Sarah!' he husked as she rifled through the dresses. `The stage is

no place for a woman, not for another seventy years at any rate: He went back to the costume rail. Àha! This is much

more like it: And so it came to pass that, once again, Sarah Jane Smith was dressed as a boy.

They stood silently by the tiring house door, listening to the hushed conversation from within

...which will not be tolerated by our masters.The welfare and survival of all three of you depend upon your

actions in the next twenty-four hours.'

This was from a harsh, rasping voice that sounded like it belonged to a very old or a very small man, or both. Either

way, it was decidedly sinister.

A second, louder voice spoke next. 'But how are we to be sure of our justification? How can it be proved for example

that he is a Catholic?'

The first voice again: 'You need no other justification than my words, my orders. You are afraid that if you are

caught you will not be absolved. I understand that, and it is not a perfect set of circumstances. But the Queen

grows restless and the events of five years ago linger in the brain. The threat is not defeated with the Armada. There

is still a fight:

A third, young and nervous voice now: 'But, sir, we are currently at peace ... '

The first voice cut in: 'We are at peace with no one. Peace only exists as a precursor to conflict, and incidentally,

gentlemen, if you enter into a state of conflict with me, I promise it to be deadly. I have enough Information

about all three of you to see you imprisoned at the very least:

Ànd what if we run?'A fourth voice.A strong, authoritative, questioningwithout-fear voice.

Ìngram!' whispered the young, ill-at-ease voice.

Òh, no. Let him ask the question. It is a good question. Do you wish to pose this to me, Master Pfizer?'

Ì do: Less sure was the voice, but a good effort nonetheless.

The movement of feet. The first voice had moved, Sarah suspected, and the other six feet had possibly recoiled, she

couldn't be certain.

Ì will say this to you, gentlemen. It takes more than divine right for a sovereign to remain on the throne for this long

in such a turbulent era -especially when that sovereign is a woman. The intelligence and omniscience behind

this age does not begin and end with Walsingham. It

not for me to disclose any more but rest assured that you are merely the

executors of a higher will. And you may take that literally.You will bring me news of Marlowe's death before sunrise

or your lives are effectively over. You know where I shall be. That is all' And with no response from the three

lectured men, the meeting was adjourned.

The Doctor and Sarah, although intrigued, realised quickly that overhearing information is all very well

as dramatic conceit, but in reality k could prove troublesome. The Doctor took a breath. 'Exit stage left, Sarah, now!'

ack out in the cooling air, the Doctor and Sarah stood side by side, looking out over the water to Paul's Wharf and

Thames Street.They were approached by an elderly man in a torn cloak.

Ì prithee pardon sir; he said to the Doctor. 'You seem a man of parts.'

Òf parts and humours both, like all of us,' the Doctor replied with none of the enjoyment he would normally display

whilst using period lingo. He seemed distracted.

The old man issued a brief gummy smile. 'Then would ye have a

sixpence or another kindness?'

Ì believe I do: The Doctor looked at him squarely 'And what is more, I shall furnish you with your request.'

The beggar held out a filthy hand. Into this grubby palm was placed a sixpence, which surprised Sarah although she

was not unaccustomed to such things.

The beggar made to leave and began to bow when the Doctor closed his large hand around the hand of the old

man and smiled.

`What is the date today, my good fellow?'

The man looked a little uncertain but was not frightened. Ì believe it to be Wednesday. And I further believe it to

be June on Friday' The beggar looked back at his imprisoned digits as the Doctor replied.

A most poetic and thorough answer.And what of the clock?' `Near seven, I believe:

The Doctor released his catch, and the man made his departure. The Doctor turned back to view the Thames

once again, and the City of London beyond. As I suspected; he remarked, looking sad.

—

— In view and opposite,'" continued the Doctor, staring out over the water, two cities stood, sea borderers,

disjoined by Neptune's might.'" "That's beautiful. Did you just think of that?'

`No, Sarah. I remembered it. My memory for things of this era is returning. Yes, it is beautiful, isn't it? He's

talking about somewhere in the Aegean, but those lines speak fully of where we stand now, don't you think? Across

the water lies the square mile, bastion of civility - to a degree - and land of comparative affluence and, again to a

point, safety. We, by contrast, stand among liars, cheats and murderers in what will one day become the same

city.And it is murderers we fear tonight.'

`Doctor, I'm... I'm sorry, but I don't understand: Sarah realised of course that the Doctor was preoccupied about

something, and that they were heading downstream towards a whole lot of trouble - but what it was all about was a

complete mystery.

***'Who* is talking about somewhere in the Aegean?' Sarah insisted.'Doctor, please talk to me, please explain'**

He turned back to her. 'Time for another stroll, I'm afraid,' he said

`Doctor, please, I don't know what that conversation in the theatre was about, but I do know that I am tired,

confused and very, very hungry'

The Doctor began to walk off eastwards along the river. He spun round. *`Quod me nutrit me destruit.'*

Sarah stood, uncertain.

The Doctor translated`That which nourishes me also destroys me.' 'What's that supposed to mean?' begged Sarah,

now catching up.

'It means a lot of things - but in your case it means that the food around

here is deplorable and certain to give you indigestion. Try to keep up'

They had only been walking for five minutes when a shout came from the doorway of an alehouse a few hundred yards from

London Bridge.

'Kit!'

The Doctor hesitated.

'Kit, come and drink with me. Kit, hey!'

The Doctor smiled and Sarah turned to see an enormously tall and broad man about the size of a door smiling at him

from a hundred yards sway. He appeared to be in what Sarah reckoned to be his late twenties -although it was difficult to tell

under such an incredible beard.

'Well, don't just stand there dancing attendance, ye young malthorse, you've got the boy, I've got the tobacco - now let

us speak of today!'

The Doctor and Sarah approached him and, as they did, the large man's smile began to thin and his eyes narrowed. At a

distance of ten feet, the stranger apologised.

'I am mistaken, sir. You are not the man I thought you were. Good even to ye: He turned to go back into the tavern.

Wait!' exclaimed t 4344

he Doctor.

The giant turned back immediately and raised his bushy eyebrows. 'I wait for no man. What do you ask of me?'

'Why did you think you knew me?' the Doctor enquired.

'Your doublet, sir. It is very like one belonging to my learned friend' 'Would this friend be the excellent Master

Marlowe?'

The beard opened to reveal a large, thick-toothed mouth. 'It would Indeed and, more, I am given heart to hear his name

praised. You are an Acquaintance of his?'

'Oh, yes. Well, a friend, dare I say,' answered the Doctor.

'How, then, do I not know you, sir?'

'It's only right that you should ask: conceded the Doctor, meeting the man's enquiring gaze. 'I am recently arrived back

on these shores from Italy. Master Marlowe was kind enough to lend me his doublet this very morning as mine was designed

by a Florentine tailor with more, shall we say, catholic tastes'

'I believe I have the measure of you: laughed the human door.

'Oh, said the Doctor and then suddenly got the joke. 'Oh, that's very good.You're a fine wit, Mr...?'

'Alleyn: he said, taking the Doctor's hands and dwarfing them in his. 'Edward Alleyn. You are in the guise of my friend

and shall drink and eat

in his place' He looked at Sarah Jane. 'And so shall you, young master.' Sarah smiled and thought it appropriate to

wipe her nose on her sleeve.

The tavern was smoky and loud. The door-sized man had been drinking alone and was obviously glad of the

company.After having ordered a meat and potato pie for the table, he excused himself 'for a merry minute'. Sarah

imagined she could hear him saying, 'For the bladder's cause'

Àll right,' the Doctor said, interpreting Sarah's not-altogether-enigmatic facial contractions. 'But I'll have to be quick'

Sarah nodded and the Doctor looked briefly around the room. 'Christopher Marlowe, Kit to his friends and no doubt

to his enemies'

The Playwright? *Doctor Faustus?'*

"that's saved some time,' said the Doctor. 'Very good, by the way. Right, then Marlowe was, if I recall correctly,

killed on the night of the thirtieth of May 1593:

"That's tonight!'

'Good again. Tonight. And from what I remember, young Kit was involved in some rather secret goings-on in

the Elizabethan... well, how can I put it, secret service'

Ànd is that why you brought us here? You could have said so instead of making me think you were doing something

nice for me:

The Doctor looked offended and searched the room once more. 'I had no idea we were going to be involved in

anything more than a pleasantly antiquated evening at the theatre. It's the TARDIS. Her vector potentialities may be

restricted to Earth's orbit but there's nothing wrong with her sensors. She located a danger spot and here we

are.And my historical and literary knowledge cannot get me much further than the certainty of one event - Marlowe's

death on this day:

`Hmm,' said Sarah.

It is possible, continued the Doctor, as the outsize thespian returned from the backyard, 'that our friend here can

tell us more. You are about to eat an unpleasant-tasting pie with the most celebrated actor of these times'

`You use my name, sir,' said Alleyn, retaking his seat and grinning.

`Yes, I have heard much about you from Kit. We knew each other at Cambridge'

'Not as students though, you have more years on you. Tell me not to speak if what I say offendsÀlleyn smiled, and

it was a warm smile, as he touched the Doctor on the shoulder.

`Ha, ha!' The Doctor's warm amusement was *equal* to Alleyn's. 'You're right, of course. I was at that time a doctor of

divinity in Master Marlowe's faculty at Corpus Christi'

`Tell me, Doctor,' Alleyn leaned forward. 'Were you present at the play this afternoon?'

Sarah smiled and began to speak. 'Well...' The Doctor laughed quite forcefully and stared at her in a *for goodness'*

***sake leave all the speaking to me and tuck into that pie that has just arrived in front of you* kind of way.**

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`Very kind of you to buy us dinner,' he said to Alleyn.

Ì gave my Tamburlaine, Doctor. Were you in the audience?'

`Regrettably not. I saw Master Marlowe in the morning and he showed me around The Rose, which is wonderful. He

then, as I said, lent me this delightful piece of clothing and assured me we would talk again later. I'm hoping to meet up

with him tonight. But you were saying... I trust the performance went well?'

`Not well, Doctor. Not well at all. Something excessively disturbing occurred.

Ì'm sorry to hear that, Master Alleyn:

`Ned.'

Thank you. Ned:

"They say this town is full of cozenage: said Ned and gulped down half the contents of a tankard with his initials

upon the side.

Ì beg your pardon. Cozenage?' said Sarah.

À pleasing tone,' laughed Ned. `But I was addressing your master. I'm quoting a line.A play by a man called

Shakespeare. *The Comedy of Errors'* The Doctor flashed Sarah an almost imperceptible smile.

`Little known, but lots of promise: Ned went on, turning back to the Doctor. 'The establishment seem to like him

anyway, although no one has really seen very much of him, if at all. He's a bit of a peasant apparently and not the

gregarious type so he's not likely to be welcome at court or in any decent circles till he cleans up his act. But he

curries favour nonetheless. Not so subversive, you see. Less trouble:

Ìn what way?' asked the Doctor.

`Well, you know Kit. Celebrating all these heathens doesn't go down too well'

`He's in some kind of fix, then?'

'Always in trouble,' Ned said and he caught the eye of a girl near the bar. 'More ale, mistress. More ale, I say!' He

turned back to the Doctor and nodded at Sarah`Can we talk freely in the boy's presence?'

`Don't worry about him,' assured the Doctor. `Memory like a sieve' `Certain high types baying for his blood, I'm

afraid,' continued Ned. 'I've

told him to keep his trap shut on so many occasions, but he's a stubborn

mule. He even pulled some kind of trick today at the theatre: The Doctor raised his eyebrows. Go on:

'Oh, you will think me an enormous fool, but he somehow made a big, blue box appear on the stage and then

disappear:

Àh, yes. He told me he was going to do that,' lied the Doctor:It's all done with mirrors, you know.'

`Well, I'm damned!'Alleyn's fist slammed onto the table, nearly breaking it. He broke into a chortle. 'He's always

been fond of his own reflection, I'll say that much.'

Ì think he's about to become even more fond of it,' said the Doctor, looking down thoughtfully at his

doublet.Alleyn was too busy gulping to catch the remark. Ì don't suppose you know where Kit might be found

tonight? He said to meet him at nine but I have forgotten where:

Òf course, Doctor. You must be tired from your voyage. For my part, I believe him to be in Deptford. He's usually

badgering John Addey or one of the other shipwrights for a commission but it never works. Kit's name has become

synonymous with danger: The Doctor motioned for him to continue and Ned went on. Anything from knife fights to

international espionage.You name it, the coxcomb's in it up to his ruff'

`But what is it about him that people object to?'

`His atheism, I suppose, Doctor. He doesn't know when to hold his tongue. We all, well, those who know him and

his work, think he's quite the most imaginative artist we've ever seen. His use of language is exquisite and I feel

that he is only beginning to fmd his style:

`Yes,' began the Doctor taking a drink and watching as Sarah finished her pie. 'It does not escape one's notice

when there is an atheist in a theology seminar.'

`Quite so; laughed Alleyn. 'Quite so, good Lord!' He swigged down the remains of his beer. `Doctor, I must away. I

have lodgings near Bishopsgate that require my presence'

Àbsolutely,' said the Doctor, rising first and offering his hand. And I must to Deptford. Great thanks to you, Ned.

Come on, boy.'

`God be with you,' 46

4s7houted Ned after them.

After an how, the Doctor and Sarah reached the west side of Deptford Strand. During their walk, the Doctor had

been lively and talkative, telling his companion about the history of the area. In Deptford, however, he became

distant.

Ì need a brief moment of reflection; confessed the Doctor, before striding towards the waterfront. Sarah

followed his course to the river bank.

At that moment, eight hundred yards to the east, a conversation was concluding in a small but well-furnished

house.The dwelling belonged in name to a widow called Mrs Bull, but was used on many occasions as a safehouse for

important talks and meetings between some of the more shrouded members of Elizabethan political society -

including three men who had, earlier that day, been in talks at The Rose.

Ìt was agreed, Nicholas,' said Ingram Frizer.

Ì know it was agreed but don't you see it would make more sense, would guarantee success if all of us were to

go there and -' protested Skeres, sweating heavily and stopping when interrupted.

`Stop behaving like a petty pickpocket,' instructed Robert Poley. 'You knew very well what you were getting

into.You're driven by coin as much as the rest of us. We are fortunate to be given this chance. This will lead, you

ignorant patch, to more money, more opportunities, more high favour:

Skeres began to go quite palèRipping off stupid rural types and

their relatives is one thing, but m... m... murder is

quite different. I don't know, I just don't know.'

Poley drew a knife. Frizer drew a knife. Skeres was stunned for a moment then sat in a chair and put his head

in his hands.

`You are privileged, Nick,' said Poley more softly. A moment passed, as did a glance between the two knife-wielding

men.

`You will do it, then?' asked Frizer

Skeres took his head from his hands to see his two cohorts putting away their daggers as if he had already complied.

Ì shall go presently. Fetch me wine.

`Good, Nicholas, good.You will repair to this room after the event,' Frizer said. And we shall confess our success

together:

`Fetch me wine; repeated Nicholas Skeres.

The Doctor was distracted from his meditations by the smell of tobacco. It was coming from further down the

riverbank and, when he looked to his right, he could see a thin piping of smoke rising into the windless air fifty

yards away. Sarah sat motionless on his left. 'Stay here,' was her Instruction.

As he approached the lone pipe-smoking man, the Doctor got one of his Insightful feelingsÌ say,' he said`That's a

terrible doublet you're wearing: The man was immediately startled and dropped his pipe. 'I'm sorry; the Doctor

continuedÌ didn't mean to alarm you. Continue your smoke. I'm a friend of Ned Alleyn's:

The tide was out and the man picked up his pipe, re-lit the bowl

and walked off the shingle and onto the damp,

dark sand. He was pale, with collar length brown hair and a thin beard traced along the jawline.

'I'm a great admirer of your work, Master Marlowe. May I call you Kit?' The Doctor stayed where he was and

opened his hands in a gesture of friendshipÌ am right aren't I? You are he, are you not?'

Marlowe answered in the affirmative and, slowly but with conviction, walked towards the Doctor, his pipe in his

right hand. They came face to face, the Doctor smiling with his wide, bright eyes and Marlowe without even the

slightest indication of expression.

`You have taken a liberty; he said.

Ah,' said the Doctor.

`Why are you wearing my doublet?' Marlowe asked, still face to face and professionally blank.

Sarah began to shiver as she watched the two men talk. The Doctor had been the more animated of the two but

gradually the other man seemed to relax and, after about ten minutes, he even allowed the Doctor to take a draw

from his pipe. She then saw them sit down together and after what seemed like an aeon, the Doctor at last turned and

waved, beckoning her. She walked over the pebbles and puddles with trepidation.

Àllow me to introduce Master Christopher Marlowe, said the Doctor, standing.

Sarah did the sleeve thing again and the Doctor laughed. `No need for that! Kit, this is my very good friend Sarah

Jane Smith'

Sarah was shocked. Doctor! Shouldn't you -'

`Delighted to meet you, Sarah Jane; Marlowe enthused, also standing. `Your esteemed companion has been most

elucidatory Indeed, such things have led me to a state of amazement hitherto uncharted within my life or indeed my

imagination. But my mind has always been open to that which makes sense, however implausible it may seem upon

receipt of the intelligence.And I am much in the Doctor's debt'

`Thank you, Kit. But it's not yet over. And you have been courageous, demonstrating, if you don't mind me saying so,

a faith that belies certain strands of your intellectual reputation.'

`Some things are brought to alter us, Doctor. I will trust in you, friend. I am honoured and humbled, and I am not

accustomed to being either. I did not know I would be murdered this night, or any other night. There are high

powers on both sides of this century's argument and I felt I was, not safe exactly, but protected enough'

`But you would always have been subversive as far as the Lord Chamberlain is concerned, let alone the

Queen,' the Doctor stated.

`Correct, Doctor. And my art is my life. I detest the hypocrisy of these times and cannot help but speak out and

become involved. I have a good brain and plenty of nerve and that is why I was chosen at Cambridge to be an

agent of whatever government I was truly working for. It's impossible to tell, so many double tongues, double

agents, so many mirrors. But fundamentally I want to - nay, have to - create. I need to write. I understand

language and I understand politics. The one is as twisted and intricate as the other if you engineer it to be so. But

not everything in my head is polemic.There are other goals I need to achieve and cannot with my reputation'

`Hence the alias, said the Doctor with an inherent excitement that Sarah could somehow feel in her stomach.

'Yes, as you put it. I am, I suppose, writing for both sides,' Marlowe explained.'It can't go on, though. I suspect

soon draw the attention of Dee and his establishment cronies'

`Which is why we must act,' said the Doctor.

'My true name denotes a celebration of savagery, of the music of power, the beauty of war and conflict, the lexicon of

blood and death. My other name does this also but the expression is lighter and for some reason the establishment is

enamoured. It is paradoxically more technical yet more free, with less insistence upon the rigours of blank verse. My

hidden side concentrates on my wordplay.A few experiments, a honing of my art - far from perfect at present. But I

will get there thanks to you, Doctor. You have given me perhaps the greatest gift known to man.Time:

Sarah, not for the first time that day, felt confused.

'All in good time, Sarah,' said the Doctor, before turning to Marlowe. 'As agreed, then?'

Marlowe faced the Doctor. 'As agreed. Thank you for the intervention. Thank you extraordinarily'

'The only way I like to be thanked,' answered the Doctor.And with that, Marlowe turned without bowing and walked

off eastwards towards Greenwich, lighting his pipe as his silhouette shortened.

'Well, he simply won't be there when they expect him to be, the Doctor explained to Sarah as they trekked further into

Deptford.

'So, it's that simple. You've just saved his life by telling him that these shady chaps were going to exterminate him

-'

'Don't use that word, it's tasteless and thoughtless,' interrupted the Doctor

'Sorry,' winced Sarah. 'Just sprang to mind. But, tell me, what did Marlowe mean when he talked about his

other name?'

Ah, yes,' said the Doctor drawing out the vowels. Before I can really talk to you about that I have to meet up with him

later tonight just to satisfy myself that the evasion truly took place. You see, this whole episode has always been

surrounded in mystery and that is why my memory has been inconstant. I couldn't quite make sense of all the

circumstances. It's selfish of me really but, as you know, I'm a terribly curious sort:

'You're still speaking in riddles. I've never understood you. I suppose I've never expected to. And I don't imagine

I'm ever going to un 49

derstand what all this has really been about'

Ì think we should have a drink, Sarah Jane:

'All right.'

The Doctor ambled towards a small corner building. This looks like a decent sort of place,' he declared, so Sarah

followed him in

Having taken two seats next to a corner table in the sawdust-floored,

candle-lit tavern, the Doctor began to explain a few things. 'Certain factions of the government believe... ah, yes,

two bottles of beer if you would be so kind.'

The barmaid smiled. 'I know who you are. You're famous, ain't ya?' The Doctor merely returned her smile and she

nodded and went to get the bottles.

`They believe, the Doctor continued, 'that Kit is attempting, in his plays, to promote a sort of anti-Protestant ethic

and... 'The Doctor stopped as he saw a nervous looking man walk into the tavern alone.The man was clearly drunk and

looked at the Doctor with an immense hatred and purpose.

`Sarah, leave, *now,* urged the Doctor as the man walked steadily towards him, taking out a dagger with his right

hand and clumsily shielding the blade from sight with his left. Sarah had hesitated to begin with, but the Doctor had

invested within his words a steel resolve and they echoed in her brain as she ran from the tavern.

Inside the tavern, Skeres lifted the Doctor from his seat with his left hand and the blade of the dagger glinted horribly

in the candlelight.

Ì would ask you to forgive m... m... me: stammered the would-be murderer as he drew back his right arm.

Tut you don't believe in forgiveness, God, Christ or anything. The Devil take ye' He threw his dagger-filled fist

forward, plunging the metal through the black velvet doublet at the height of the Doctor's left pectoral. The

assailant then withdrew the knife and ran from the table, out of the doors.

The Doctor fell to the floor, face down.

`Murder! Murder!' screamed the barmaid, dropping the two bottles of ale in her hand. 'They've killed him

They've killed Marlowe. That's Marlowe that is - you can tell by

the fancy clothes'

`Kit Marlowe? The playmaker?' asked the burly man in his forties who owned the tavern.

`Yeah: piped up another, this time a skinny barfly with long hair and a mead-stained mouth. Definitely him. Had it

coming, so they say?

`God's arse, frowned the taverner. 'Jake, Robert, William, George' Four men got up from a table in the middle of

the room`Get rid of him.Three bottles each.'

`Five: said one of them.

`Yes, five then Get rid of him:

Sarah, who had run to the riverbank, heard the noise of drunken men approaching and hid in the first large

shadow she could find. She soon saw four men carrying what appeared to be another man. They were a little too far

away for her to discern exactly. She moved stealthily along the shingle to find out more.

The men walked up to a small rowing boat and dropped the man into it. They then pulled the boat along the

sand, which was quite an effort judging by the sounds they were making and the curses coming from their ale-

drenched lips. Once onto the river they rowed out to almost halfway and dropped the body over the side. As the

body was turned, Sarah could make out the orange lining of the Doctor's borrowed doublet and she screamed. The

men looked in her direction but it was soon clear that they hadn't seen anyone as they began pointing to different

places on the riverbank and shushing each other.

By the time the boat reached the shore, the tide had taken it much further east along Deptford Strand than

they'd bargained for and so Sarah was reasonably safe for the moment, but no less distressed. The Doctor had been

killed. She was alone. Lost in time, lost in place and lost in grief. She slumped down onto the salty stones and caught

her breath while weeping bitterly. There was now no sign of the men They must have left the boat further along the

shore and gone home.

At this time, unseen by Sarah, two men walked into the tavern behind her shrouded haven.

They sat down at a table that was already taken by an old man. `What happened here tonight?' inquired

Robert Poley.

The old man licked his lips. Ì wouldn't know about that, gentlemen: À beer for our aged friend,' shouted Frizer

to the distracted barmaid `Thank you, sirs,' said the old fellow when the ale was placed in front of

his haggard features.

`What happened here tonight?' Poley posed once more as he swiped away the bottle.

Ì'm happy to tell ye, sirs. Please let me drink:

`Very well, and be swift,' snarled Ingram Frizer, taking the bottle from Poley and thrusting it into the grey palms

of the wrinkled old goat opposite him.

`Simple murder,' said the old man, smiling, and he gulped down the beer. He looked at his interrogators with the

cloudy liquid dripping from his five teeth. 'Ha, ha! That brazen ne'er-do-well Kit Marlowe. And good riddance.

Nothing but trouble. I liked the bloody bits though... ah...' He downed the rest of the bottle and when his head

had regained its verticality, the men were gone.

Sarah ran eastwards along the sand with the notion of picking up a boat and trying to think of a way to help the

dead Doctor. The futility of it all slowed her pace, and because of this she was in the right area at the right time to

witness the sudden burst of a human form springing out from the river.

It was the Doctor's head and arms. He was looking around so Sarah shouted, 'Doctor!'

Throw me a rope, old girl!'

Luckily the tide was bringing him further in. He started to swim. Sarah began to look around her and then she

heard him say, 'Don't worry I can make it' Sarah stood with water up to her knees shivering and smiling and crying.

As he walked out of the water he asked, 'Has anyone seen you?'

'No, I don't think so,' she answered, and his dripping hand took hers as they ran along the sands towards the

timber sheds.

Ì don't understand, Doctor. I thought... I thought you were dead:

`Ye of little faith,' he said, approaching the large wooden doors of the lock-up. 'Speaking of which'

And there was Marlowe. He looked nervous and anxious.

`Kit'

`My dear Doctor.'

`What on earth is going on?' asked Sarah Jane.

`Let's get inside, Sarah' said the Doctor.

Inside the TARDIS, the Doctor had dried himself off and got changed whilst Sarah made hot drinks. Marlowe was

still waiting outside, on the Doctor's instructions.

`But they threw you in the Thames!' she cried. 'You looked totally lifeless. I mean, they must have thought

you were dead too. What happened?'

`Well, I played dead, and I did get stabbed. But fortunately, the killer went for the heart'

Ànd you're okay because you have two?' Sarah tried to think ahead of the story.

`No: The Doctor shook his head. 'Nothing to do with that. I told you I was a big admirer of the theatre from this

period, didn't I?'

Sarah conceded but still remained perplexed.

`You see, the Doctor went on, 'it has become my custom to carry the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* with me

wherever I go. As a sort of talisman, I suppose, as well as the guarantee of a good read.And I happen to carry it in

my breast pocket. Providing, of course, that what I am wearing has a breast pocket, and fortunately this fantastic piece

of apparel does'

The Doctor produced from the hung-up and dripping doublet an extremely thick hardback book. It had a

rather macabre blade-shaped hole running most of the way through it

Ì only got a little s 5

c 3

ratch. All thanks to Shakespeare,' the Doctor said, lightly. Sarah marvelled at this and shook

her head in wonder.

`Saved by the Bard, eh?' she ventured.

`Now, that's not bad at all, my dear Sarah.'

'But what about Marlowe?' she said, suddenly remembering.

`Yes!' said the Docto5r2. 'Come along. You'll find this most diverting - for the rest of your life probably'

'I'm sorry I couldn't let you in,' explained the Doctor with gentle seriousness. 'But it would be too much for you.

We'll have to leave it at that, Kit, I'm afraid'

'Whatever you deem reasonable, Doctor. I will not question you' 'I'm flattered'

'You should be'

Marlowe and the Doctor laughed.

`Sarah Jane: The Doctor put his arm around her neck. 'Allow me to introduce you to someone very special'

Sarah was really quite bored with looking dumbfounded but she just couldn't help it. She had already met Marlowe.

What on earth was the Doctor baffing on about?

`Sarah Jane, said the Doctor, rather ceremoniously. He cleared his throat. 'It is my amazing pleasure to introduce you to Mr

William Shakespeare: Marlowe smiled and bowed.

Sarah had stopped looking confused. She was just looking. She squeezed the Doctor's arm and turned her head to

him with her brow slightly furrowed.

'You wanted to know what he meant by his other name Well... now you do'

'Maybe we can just, I don't know, float around the ether for a while,' suggested Sarah, tidying away her curling tongs.

'It's certainly an option,' said the Doctor, once again setting a course for wherever the TARDIS fancied.

'I might just go and relax for a while,' blinked Sarah. Can I

borrow your *Complete Works of Shakespeare?* I think I might

understand it a bit better at the moment. I never have before'

'Ali; began the DoctorÌ'm afraid that's not possible' He looked a little sheepish.

Sarah opened her mouth widèYou didn't give it to -'

'I'm afraid I did. It was a parting gift:

'You're incorrigible!'

'You could say I go from "bard" to "verse"...'

'Doctor!'

'I told him to only use it if he really gets stuck:

Sarah laughed with her hand over her mouth. `So, he's not going to be Christopher Marlowe anymore?'

`No, no; confirmed the Doctor. `Marlowe's dead.They killed me - I mean him. And he will now just write under the

name of William Shakespeare. He's promised to keep a low profile so no one untrustworthy will recognise him -

and I think he'll see it through. In many ways Shakespeare was no more than a rumour. Only his works are on

record.There's no real empirical evidence of anyone of that name in courtly circles, so as long as he keeps his head

down the secret should die with him in around twenty-three years'

And only we will know?' asked Sarah excitedly.

Òh, I'm sure some bright spark will work it out in the fullness of time but until then -' the Doctor put his finger

to his lips - 'mum's the word, as you say.'

Òh yes; nodded Sarah Jane. Ì understand perfectly. The rest is silence'

CHAOS

Eric Saward

It was Monday somewhere in 1985... or at least it should have been.

The Doctor lay at the bottom of what seemed like a deep, dark hole. He was in enormous pain and somewhere

inside his head he could hear a strange twangy sound which echoed and reverberated. There was also a smell, a

sickly sweet all-perva 545

sive odour which had invaded his lungs and seemed to be trying to suffocate him The Time Lord

didn't know which part of his brain was registering these sensations, or whether it was all just a dream, but

somehow he knew that if he didn't wake up very soon a new experience would overtake *him... Death.*

The Doctor groaned. In his mind he struggled to sit up, but found he was constrained by a faintly glowing,

netlike membrane. In part the covering was course and roughly woven, while in other areas the texture was soft and

comforting like the feel of Angora. There was also something vaguely familiar about it, like the handshake of a long-

forgotten friend. *Well, maybe not an old friend,* he thought, *but surely something,* er... The Doctor struggled to

remember... And then, like solving a crossword clue that had evaded him all day, the eureka moment came. Suddenly

the Time Lord knew what the membrane was: pure, concentrated CHAOS. The familiar substance the Doctor

seemed so often to generate as he travelled in time and space had now, like Marley's ghost, enveloped him in a

suffocating burden of his own creation.And as the Doctor struggled to free himself, the membrane suddenly split

open and there was light of such intensity that he was blinded. When he finally regained his sight, he *VMS* on board the

TARDIS.

The Doctor looked around and saw Tegan standing at the main console. Somewhere else in the room he thought he

caught the merest glimpse of Jamie and Susan, or was it Turlough and Romana? Whether they were there or not,

they all had the same expression, which told him things ' were not as they should be. And, suddenly, the Doctor

knew why...

One moment the Time Lord and Tegan had been quietly slipping and sliding their way through the cracks in time,

the next they were hurtling along what appeared to be a never-ending hole in the time/space continuum. As the

force built up, Tegan had been flattened against the wall of the console room, while the Doctor, desperately clinging to the

console itself, attempted to gain control of the TARDIS.

`What's happening?'Tegan screamed.

Time spillage!'

Pressure increased as the room continued to spin. With enormous effort, the Doctor managed to kick open a

small hatch covering the manual override for the time stabilisers at the base of the console's pedestal. Watched

by the barely conscious Tegan, he slowly and painfully worked his way down to the opening.With leaden fingers he

pulled at the time stabiliser's controls, but nothing happened. Summoning all his strength he tugged again, but it

still refused to move. Realising he must generate more leverage, the Doctor knew he would have to exploit the

additional force generated by the spinning room.This meant

releasing the hold his entwined legs had around the

pedestal and allowing his body to swing out like a gondola on an out-of-control merry-go-round. The reality was, if his

grip failed, it would mean their immediate death and the destruction of the TARDIS. Aware there was no other

choice, the Doctor carefully locked his fingers around the controls, and satisfied that his grip was the strongest

possible, released his legs. Pain tore through his arms and shoulders as his body snapped ridged under the strain,

but his grip held, and slowly, very slowly, the controls began to move, and the time stabilisers took effect...

It was a full hour after the room had ceased spinning before the Doctor and Tegan summoned up the strength to

move. Slowly, and very much in their own time, they picked themselves up and started to massage strained

muscles. Although dazed, both were relatively unharmed.

`So, that's time spillage,' muttered Tegan.

Ìndeed.' The Doctor checked a dial on the console:But from a very odd source. It isn't natural... Someone,

somewhere is producing the spillage in the form of a *time corridor*. It's the reason we're weaving in time. We've been

caught in the corridor's drag'

The unhappy look on Tegan's face told the Time Lord all he needed to know about the concerns his companion

was experiencing. Crossing to her, the Doctor put a reassuring arm around her shoulder.

`We'll get out...' he said gently. 'When the moment's right.' He then rambled on about variants in time,

compression co-ordinates and vacuum ratios, none of which

Tegan seemed to understand. Taking her by the hand,

he then took her to the console and carefully explained what he would do to escape from the time corridor. She

watched as he pressed buttons, flicked switches and then tapped out instructions on the computer terminal.

Tegan said it reminded her of how an ex-boyfriend had once shown her around the cockpit of his small aeroplane in

Australia. She had even surprised herself by how quickly she had learned the function of each instrument and what

part it played in the 5

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verall operation of the aircraft.

Èven when I took the controls for the first time, she remembered,Ì felt

confident that I could learn to fly. Yet still, after having watched you

operate the TARDIS a hundred times, I doubt I could even park this thing.'

`Right,' said the Doctor, making a fmal adjustment to the console 'I think we're about ready.'

Tegan braced herself in preparation for the expected jolt. Finding a handhold, the Doctor gripped the console,

and after settling into a comfortable position, pressed the master control. Suddenly the noise of the ship's engines

roared at a deafening level as the floor of the time machine lurched at forty-five degrees. Grimly they held on as the

G-force again increased to bone-crunching levels, while the vibration felt as though a giant, manic dog was trying to

shake the TARDIS to death.As the pounding continued, the sound of a bell was heard to toll. Such was its tone, it left

the listener in no doubt that its echoing resonance indicated a dire foreboding that something dreadful was about

to happen.Although in extreme pain from the G-force, the Doctor knew what the tolling sound meant'. As they braced

themselves for the inevitable, deep in the heart of the TARDIS vital electronics also reverberated to the sound of the

bell. Then suddenly, as though on cue from CHAOS itself, they exploded and the time machine turned, like a tiny

supernova, into a cloud of cosmic dust.

The TARDIS was no more...

Not* screamed the Doctor in the silence of his mind. *It didn't happen like that! I left Tegan alive on Earth!

But the visions of CHAOS hadn't finished with the him. And suddenly the Doctor was running...

It was raining hard, and the industrial estate was as drab and shabby as the old man who shuffled along a broken

pavement. Although the man had spent the night sleeping rough he was now on his way to a local café where he

knew he could earn his breakfast in exchange for an hour of odd-jobbing. It was an equitable arrangement, which

pleased him After breakfast, while chatting to to the café's manager, he would linger over an extra cup of coffee before

making his way to a nearby park where he would pick up a discarded copy of *The Times* or *The Guardian* and

spend the remainder of the morning curled up on a bench reading.

Whipped up by a strong breeze, the rain lashed at the road. Downpipes gurgled and spluttered as they ferried water

from the abandoned factory roofs. The man lumbered into a doorway to shelter, and removed a well-worn tobacco

tin from a pocket deep inside his dripping overcoat.Then

carefully, so as not to get the tobacco wet, he levered open

the lid, pulled a paper from the Blue Rizla packet and unravelled just enough tobacco to form the size of smoke he

wanted. With the cigarette made, the man

popped it into his mouth, took out an ancient petrol lighter, lit the

cigarette and inhaled deeply. It was his first of the day and it tasted good.

The old man stared at the rain and wondered how much longer it would last. Suddenly further up the street, a

loud bang was heard as the main door to a derelict factory was violently thrown open. Casually puffing on his

cigarette, the elderly man glanced in the direction of the noise and saw, running along the road, a youngish man

dressed in a light Edwardian frock coat, as though for a fancy-dress party. As the old man looked harder he realised

the costume was shabby and crumpled as though its owner had been living in it for weeks. But, most sinister of all,

the running man looked terrified as though fleeing for his life.

Breathing heavily, the Doctor paused, his two hearts pounding in his chest. From the style of the buildings

around him, he knew he was on twentieth-century Earth.Although this gave him some reassurance, he was now

desperate for somewhere safe to hide. Seeing a dilapidated door swinging gently on its rusting hinges, he slipped into

one of the deserted factories.

As he did, the same violent door banging was again heard, this time accompanied by screams and urgent shouts as

further men and women spilled from the same factory from which the Doctor had emerged. Panic stricken, the group

then ran off in different directions. A moment later, other figures, dressed in what appeared to be radiation

suits, also appeared. As they came into view they started to fire pulses of energy from strange-looking guns. As the

muted sounds of the weapons echoed and thudded off the walls of the surrounding buildings, first one then a second

fugitive dissolved into a flash of light. Unable to do anything, the horrified Doctor could only watch the cold-

blooded murder whilst despairing at his total helplessness.

Suddenly CHAOS gripped the Time Lord's mind again and he was back in the TARDIS, only this time it did not

explode. Instead... slowly, very slowly the time machine's superior power had began to exert itself, and it finally broke

out of the time corridor. With the TARDIS again steady, the Doctor quickly ducked under the console, clamped the

time stabilisers in position and closed the hatch.As he pulled himself up, his eye was caught by a flashing light. A

closer examination of the controls showed the time machine to be on a locked-off course travelling parallel with the

time corridor.

`So where are we going?' inquired Tegan

`Well_ actually... it's, er... it's somewhere called Raaga.'

Raaga, he explained, was a planet the size of Mars in the vector known as Simian's Claw and was run by Terileptils

for the purpose of mining the

mineral known as tinclavic. Rather than use skilled engineers and modern excavating equipment, the Terileptils used slave

labour to gouge the mineral from the ground. This made Raaga

the most feared and hated planet in its quadrant of the

galaxy. Faced with working in its mines, many preferred to commit suicide than experience the long, lingering death that

otherwise awaited them.

Arriving at Raaga, the Doctor and Tegan soon found the source of the time corridor. Desperate to escape, and literally

unable to dig their way off the planet, the prisoners had built themselves another form of tunnel -one constructed to pass

through time. Knowing of the planet's terrible reputation, the Doctor was happy to fine-tune their construction. Not only did

he make it safer to use, but he reduced much of the disruptive time turbulence. By doing so, the Doctor had also broken every

law, ruling and dictate ever issued by the High Council of Gallifrey concerning the misuse of time.

With 'the time tunnel functioning, the prisoners were ready to escape. Unfortunately, as often happens when such things

are planned, they had been betrayed.As they entered the time tunnel they were ambushed by a Terileptil murder squad.

Although the Doctor had intended to follow the escapees to their destination in his TARDIS, he too was cut off and forced to

use the time tunnel to save his life. With Tegan and the TARDIS trapped on Raaga it was vital for the Doctor to somehow get

back...

But how?

On Earth, the Doctor knew he couldn't remain where he was without the risk of discovery, so silently he crossed to the

factory door. On the way, he noticed a rusty marlin spike on the floor and, realising its potential use as a weapon, he picked

it up.

Although the rain had stopped, water still dripped noisily from

the buildings. Cautiously, the Doctor stepped into the

empty road.Whereas he was safe for the moment, he knew that the Terileptil's murder squad could be waiting for him

anywhere. Using the wall as cover, the nervous Doctor moved silently along, only too aware he needed somewhere safe to

hide.

Maybe I could go to the Brigadier, **he considered.** ***I'm always welcome there.***

Heartened by the idea, and the memory of the Brigadier's welcoming smile, the Doctor quickened his pace. In his mind he

was safe, home and dry.That was until an old man stepped out in front of him.

`Hey' the man whispered. 'I've got something for you'

With his mind in a sudden turmoil the Doctor stared at the man. *Surely I'm not going to fail now!* he screamed inside his

head. Suddenly the old man plunged his hand inside his overcoat. As he did, the Doctor's mind uploded. Still clutching the

marlin spike, the Time Lord drove it into the

old man's chest and, with the half-smoked cigarette stuck to his bottom lip, he slid down the wall of the

doorway and died. As the Doctor cautiously approached the body, the old man's hand slipped from inside his

overcoat - but inste 6

a 0**d of a weapon, it was clutching a well-worn tin of tobacco. The old man had not intended to**

harm the Doctor, simply to offer him a friendly smoke...

No!* screamed the Doctor in the silence of his mind *You've got it wrong again. I would never do anything like that!

As the Doctor struggled to free himself from the membrane, he was terrified of being plunged, yet again, into

another CHAOS dream. Instead the twangy noise and obnoxious smell he had experienced earlier returned. As

he focused on the sound it began to transmogrify into the familiar vowels, consonants and American accent that

belonged to Peri, his current companion aboard the TARDIS.

Are you all right?' she said urgently.

The Doctor opened his eyes and the daylight burned into his brain. `What's that smell?' he asked weakly.

Peri held up a bottle of lavender water she had been using as smelling salts. Ì thought it would help bring you

round.' Her face beamed down at him, delighted the Doctor was now conscious.

Realising it would be ungallant to criticise her efforts, he returned the smile 'Just what the Doctor ordered'

With some effort, the Time Lord climbed to his feet and found he was standing in front of a cash-point machine.

Suddenly events flooded back into his mind. He remembered Peri had said she was homesick and wanted to visit

Earth. The Doctor had obliged and the TARDIS had materialised on Broadway in New York. Peri had then said

she wanted to do something uniquely American, so had decided to take the Doctor to a delicatessen.To pay for the

planned feast she would first have to get some money from a cash-point machine.This the Doctor now remembered,

but he was still confused about what happened next.

`You were mugged'

'Mugged!'

`Some guy snatched my card, you tried to stop him and he knocked you down.'

`*Knocked* me down?' Both the Doctor's words and his garish, multicoloured clothing were getting attention from

passers-by.

`You hit your head on the sidewalk and were knocked unconscious:

At first the Doctor was indignant, remonstrating that he, who had defeated some of the most dangerous forces

in the universe, could never be brought down by a common mugger. Even though the large bump

developing on his head suggested otherwise, inwardly the Doctor breathed a sigh of relief. *Those awful*

nightmares were nothing more than the side effects of concussion.

Feeling much better, the Doctor and Peri strolled to where the TARDIS had been discreetly parked in a nearby

alley. As he opened its door the Doctor thought he heard a sinister chuckle. He dismissed it as further side effects from

the mugging.

The Doctor might have been less sanguine if he'd known his dreams had, in fact, been generated by a microscopic, but

highly dangerous, CHAOS droid which had recently taken up residence in the Time Lord's brain. Although the

Doctor thought the dream incident over, little did he realise *that* CHAOS was here to stay.

But that's another story...

Ante Bellum

Stephen Hatcher

Maurice Bernard was in a particularly excited mood as he made his way to work that morning.The sky was clear

and blue, as it was every morning and the gentle sounds of the Aegean waves, lapping onto the rocks below, carried up

the gentle slope to t 6

h 1**e footpath - as they did every morning.**

The sea itself was a blue that defied description in its intensity - bluer than any sea Maurice had seen before,

bluer even than the sea that washed against the shore of his own Provencal home.There was no doubt that the

island of Ilyas Ada was one of the more idyllic spots to which his work could have brought him.And today Maurice's

humour was beyond ecstatic.

Less than four ye 6a3rs since graduating from the Sorbonne, here he was, assisting in perhaps the greatest

archaeological discovery since Schliemann unearthed the ruins of Troy itself - and it was he, Bernard, together

of course with Professor Evren, who was carrying on Schliemann's work. Evren had been certain that the

island had been the site of an important Trojan settlement - probably even a major port. Yesterday's find went a

very long way to justifying that certainty. Maurice counted his blessings. In the present political climate, with the

Turkish and French governments on not the best of terms, it was only his father's friendship with the Professor - and

Evren's contacts among those that mattered in the court of the Sultan in Constantinople, that had permitted his

participation in the expedition. Now it was he who had found the goblet. Maurice felt proud, excited and above all

very lucky.

He followed the path over the brow of the hill, from where he would begin the descent to the dig site. In spite of

the heat of the morning sun, what he discovered left him cold. Where yesterday there had been the huts and tents

of the expedition, where yesterday there had been Professor Evren, the other members of the party, their mules,

bearers and servants, where yesterday there had been a fairly substantial hill, there was now absolutely nothing -

nothing but a blackened, smouldering crater. In the very centre of this scene of devastation, Maurice saw the goblet,

its gold shining in the rays of the morning sun.

'Turkey, Ace. 1914. To be precise, Constantinople - better known in your time as Istanbul: The little man in the battered

straw hat hurried out of the incongruous blue box almost as soon as it had completed its materialisation,

Around seven or eight inches tall it lacked any decoration other than a narrow band of what appeared to be writing - although not in Greek or any other recognisable script of the ancient Mediterranean region.

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"That's what we thought at first, but no. Of course, our chaps haven't

had occurred and headed off in the direction of the waterfront, swinging his curiously shaped umbrella as he went.

thing too, it's not gold'

'1914?' The young girl in the black jacket festooned with badges was almost running in her efforts to keep up with

the man. 'The First World War - just what we needed!'

'Well, not quite, it's actually June 1914 - the eighth in fact - and war doesn't break out until August.'

Not one of the many market traders and customers, boatmen and other assorted citizens of the capital of the

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nt of the Golden Horn, paid any attention to the oddly

dressed pair. Most simply got on with buying, selling, boating or whatever else it was that the regular routine of

their daily lives called upon them to do.

The Doctor took a small device, which an observer of a century later might have mistaken for a miniature

television, from one of the pockets of his cream linen jacket and began studying it intently, his brow furrowed in

concentration. Ace began to explore her surroundings, examining the market stalls and watching the boats on the

narrow waterway.

Without looking up, the Doctor called out to his companion, 'Ace, don't wander off. Hostilities may not have started yet,

but Constantinople on the eve of war is still a dangerous place.'

Reluctantly Ace rejoined the Doctor and began looking over his shoulder at the device. The Doctor shuffled

around, so that she couldn't see what he was doing.

`Have you got a fix on it?' the girl asked.

Òh, it's in the city all right. It's just a matter of where. The problem is time,Ace. I have no idea how much of it we

have. The energy burst that we felt in the TARDIS was certainly just the start.Another one like it could be released

at any moment - if that were to happen here in Constantinople, it would wipe half of the city off the map.

However, the next burst is likely to be much more powerful than the first - who knows what the result might be!'

Ànd is there no way it can be turned off by whoever has got it?'

'Possibly, I'm not sure. Certainly not easily' answered the Doctor. 'And in any case that would be very nearly as

dangerous.This is 1914,Ace. Imagine the consequences of one side or the other being in possession of a weapon of

such power as the world moves towards war.'

Ace whistled through her teeth an 6d4 hurried after the Doctor, who had set off towards the Egyptian Bazaar, still

examining the tracking device.

it was found last month, by archaeologists on one of the islands,' Andrew

Underwood informed his superior as they entered the large office. The

older man examined the object on the table closely. It was a golden cup -

pick it up'

Fenton hesitated for a moment before reaching out and taking hold of the cup. Lifting it effortlessly, he looked

incredulously to his colleague.

t'Underwood, that's amazing, it has practically no weight at all. What is it

made of?'

`We don't know. All we are sure of is that it was found among some of the oldest remains ever to be excavated in

this part of the world; that it is made of a material that we have no knowledge of; and that last week, the whole of the

excavation site together with all of the people in the area, were mysteriously incinerated'

Fenton regarded the object in his hand. 'Incinerated, you say? Then it's a weapon of some sort?'

`Perhaps not exactly a weapon, but certainly an object of immense power. Just think, Fenton.There's a war on

its way. Perhaps not tomorrow,

perhaps not even this year, but it must come soon. Possession of that small cup and all that it contains would give any

state a decisive advantage. We would be invincible.The British Empire *will* be invincible!'

I

Fenton continued to examine the goblet as if in a dream. Then coming out of his reverie with a slight start, he

placed the cup almost gingerly 1 back down on the table.

`How has it come to us?'

`Well, there was one survivor, a young Frenchman. It seems he took the

goblet and brought it here to Constantinople. We think he intended to take

it to the Turkish authorities, but we had got wind of what was happening. He met with a little accident at the hands of

our Mister Eardley`

'Are the opposition aware?'

Ìt would seem so.That's why we had it brought here, rather than to the embassy. Both the local spooks and our

friends from Berlin are all over the city'

`Right, well done,' said Fenton, crossing to the door. He opened it and beckoned in one of the two men who had

been standing guard outside.

`Come in, Eardley. It needs to go in the safe'

`Yes, Mister Fenton, sir'

Eardley picked up the cup and began to walk back towards the open door. Without warning, the object began

to glow. As Fenton and Underwood watched in horror, a blinding flash of light enveloped Eardley and his

burden.The man had no time to cry out, as he ceased to be a man and became a small pile of ashes. The goblet

dropped to the carpet, apparently once more inert and harmless. Open mouthed and wordless, Underwood and

Fenton looked at each other with a mixture of fear, shock and sheer delight.

The Doctor and Ace were seated at a table, outside a small coffee house in the shadow of the Blue Mosque. The

Doctor was still engrossed in the tracker device, while Ace, sipping a small glass of apple tea, tried to engage him in

conversation.

ÒK, so I understand that this thing we're looking for is like, massively powerful and dangerous...'

`Hmm, what?' the Doctor mumbled distractedly, without looking up from the tracker.

...but what is it?'

`Dangerous,Ace - very dangerous'

`Professor?!'

The Doctor looked up at his companion, an expression of annoyance across his face.'Ace, please! Can't you see I'm

busy? If the interstellar drive propulsion unit releases another energy burst before we can find and remove it, then

we and this entire pl 6a6

67net are in serious trouble!'

'So, it's a propulsion unit, then?'

`What?'

`The thing we're looking for, it's an interstellar drive propulsion unit:

`Yes, yes; the Doctor sighed and put the tracker down on the table in front of him. 'Some twelve thousand years

ago, a Krivani exploration vessel was passing through this solar system, when some sort of accident occurred and it

blew up?

`Krivani? Never heard of them'

`Well, that's not altogether surprising, Ace. The Krivani civilisation was an intensely private one. It was only after

many millennia of isolation that they began to take an interest in their surroundings, and to venture beyond their

own solar system to explore the galaxy. The sad thing was, that almost as soon as they broke their isolation, they got

into some trivial dispute with their immediate neighbours and were annihilated in a terrible war. Anyway, all

those years of isolation had allowed them to develop some of the most advanced interstellar drive systems that the

galaxy has ever known. It is to their credit that their weapons'

development was nowhere near as advanced - which, of course led to their downfall. It's sad how often that sort of thing

happens` The Doctor sighed and looked wistfully into space, pausing in his account, seemingly lost in his thoughts.

`So, about this propulsion unit...?'

`What? Oh, yes. Well, when the Krivani ship blew up, the propulsion unit was all that survived. These devices were very

expensive, too much so to just abandon, so it was programmed to land on the nearest planet and conceal itself, sending out

a signal to its makers to come and collect it.

`But they never camè

`No, they had other things on their minds - in particular the complete destruction of their entire race, planet and culture.'

And how do you come to know so much about it, Professor?' Well,Ace, the history is well known to my

people...'

`The Time Lords`

...the Time Lords. But the exact location of the device has never been dear. It seems it was damaged not long after it

arrived here, and so has remained hidden. The Krivani possessed something resembling a primitive chameleon

circuit, which will have allowed it to blend in with its surroundings. The TARDIS first detected traces of the signal when I

visited this part of the world, many years ago - I was a much older man then. It was during the Trojan War.'

`You were here during the Trojan War?'

`Yes, nasty business - no one came out of that with much credit. Anyway, the TARDIS detected the signal, but with

everything else that was going on, I didn't have time to do anything about it. I always suspected that it would turn up again

though - and sure enough it has`The Doctor reached into his cavernous pocket and took out a local newspaper, opening

it to page five. In the bottom right-hand corner, Ace read a

confused and garbled account of the incident on Ryas Ada.

`So, you see, Ace, we need to find the propulsion unit - and find it quickly'

As Ace looked up from the newspaper, the tracker began to bleep frantically. The Doctor snatched it up, a look of near

panic on his face. `What's happening, Professor?'

Ànother energy pulse,Acè

`But you said... Why are we still alive?'

Ì don't know.We've been lucky; it was a much smaller pulse. Next time might be different, but... the good news is that I

know where it is. Come on, Ace!' Throwing a handful of coins onto the table, the Doctor jumped up and ran off down the

street with Ace struggling to keep up behind him.

With surprising agility, the Doctor scrambled over the wall and into the grounds of the house. Ace - having

discovered an unlocked gate, some yards along the wall - saw him land in a bush. The Doctor recovered his composure

and took cover. Seconds later, Ace was by his side and the Doctor gave the girl a brief quizzical look, before taking

out his tracker and smiling grimly. 'This is it Ace, it's in this house. It doesn't seem to be active at the moment, but we

haven't any time to lose'

The pair made to leave their hiding place and cross the courtyard towards the house, when two figures came

around the corner.The Doctor pulled Ace back down behind the bush and they waited silently.

`You saw what it can do, Fenton,' said one of the figures. `With a weapon like that in our hands, none of the great

powers will dare to challenge the Empire. We need to get it back to London as quickly as possible'

The Doctor gave Ace a worried frown.

Ì know, Underwood,' said the second man. Ì know. But you saw what it did to Eardley It's just too dangerous to

contemplate trying to move it. We need to find a way to make it safe before we blow ourselves up.'

Without noticing the two interlopers, Fenton and Underwood headed into the house.

'They're right, aren't they, Professor?' said Ace. 'If we try moving that thing, we are as likely as they are to set it off -

and to take the city up with us!'

`We have no choice. It is imperative that someone gets that drive unit off-planet immediately - and no one else is

likely to be able to do that. It's up to us, Ace'

Silently, the pair left the cover of the bushes and approached the house. Checking that the room beyond was

empty, the Doctor carefully manipulated the catch on a window and slid it open.They were inside.

The room was sumptuously decorated in the Western style, although the plush carpets and kilims made some

acknowledgement of its Turkish location. The Doctor consulted the tracker and whispered to Ace. 'It's in the room

above us' Crossing to the door, the Doctor opened it just far enough to see through the crack - the coast was clear.

Keeping close to the wall, they moved around the hallway and climbed the large wooden staircase. Reaching the top, it

became clear that they could go no further without being seen. Looking carefully around the corner, they saw an

imposing figure standing sentry outside one of the dosed doors leading off the landing. Ace looked at the Doctor,

who nodded silently to her, indicating that what they were looking for did indeed lie beyond that door.

Reaching into his pocket, the Doctor withdrew a handful of glass marbles and hurled them as hard as he could

down the landing, in the opposite direction to the guard. The ruse worked. The man, hearing the

noise, cautiously left his post, passed the crouching Doctor and Ace without seeing them, and set off to investigate.

As soon as his back was turned, the duo sprinted for the now unguarded door. The Doctor turned the handle. It was

unlocked. Still unseen, they opened the door and entered, taking a chance that the room would be unoccupied. They

were lucky. The room was empty apart from the golden cup, lying on the ground surrounded by his ashes.

As the Doctor began to examine the object, wafting the tracker over it, Ace heard the guard return to his place

outside the door. Is it safe?' she whispered to the Doctor.

No,Ace, it's not safe - but it seems to be sleeping for the moment. We have a little time to move it, but we need to

hurry'

Carefully, the Doctor picked up the goblet and put it into the pocket of his jacket.

`How do we get out?' whispered Ace.

Silently, the Doctor pointed towards the window. Before Ace could object, the Doctor had released the catch

and jumped through. Ace hesitated briefly, but the sound of the door opening behind her helped her to make up

her mind. As she landed in the courtyard below,Ace rolled expertly and jumped to her feet, running after the

Doctor who was already half way up the wall.

`Hey, stop."The call came from the first-floor window that they had just exited and was followed by the sounds of

pistol shots.Ace quickly glanced behind her, to see Underwood and Fenton run out of the house followed soon after by

the man with the gun. Sprinting on,Ace followed the Doctor over the wall.

The Doctor ran down the narrow street, Ace following a little distance behind. As Ace rounded a corner, she saw

the Doctor's flight being curtailed. He'd run into two men wearing the uniform of the Turkish police. Without a

word, the policemen took firm hold of him and bundled him into a waiting van. Seeing this scene, Ace threw herself

against the wall, avoiding capture. As she watched the Doctor being taken away, she felt the cold metal of a gun

barrel behind her ear.

'We need to ask you a few questions, miss,' said Underwood.

As the van negotiated the narrow streets of Constantinople, the Doctor attempted to engage his captors in

conversation. 'I'm the Doctor, how do you do?' he began, raising his hat.The two policemen said nothing, eyeing their

captive warily 'Have you been doing this work long?' The Doctor's second gambit was addressed to the bigger of the

pair, an enormous bald man with a full black moustache, who had the appearance of a Turkish wrestler. Again, no

response came.

The Doctor was still considering what to say that might tempt the second man into conversation when the van

pulled through the gates of the city's police headquarters.The rear doors were opened from outside and the Doctor

was pulled out and bustled into the building. Hurriedly and furtively he checked the golden beaker. It seemed still

to be dormant. The Doctor sighed in relief, but this relief was short-lived as the precious artefact was snatched from

him, the violent movement causing it to vibrate alarmingly and the guard almost to drop the cup

The Doctor flinched but the feared explosion did not come. Before he could react further, the Doctor was half

dragged down a narrow passageway and thrown into a dark, damp and decidedly foul-smelling cell.

Ace was worried on two counts. Firstly, she was worried at being tied to a chair in the middle of the room which

had, until recently, housed the cup. Secondly, she was worried for the Doctor. She remembered watching a film on

television - *Midnight Express* or something. She remembered that Turkish jails were not nice places. At least,

Turkish jails in the 1970s were not nice places; heaven knows what they were like in 1914. There was not much she

could do about it though - she had her own problems to think about. These problems were brought into sharper

focus for her as Underwood came back into the room, followed by the man she'd seen him talk to earlier.

`So, young lady, your friend has taken something that belongs to us. We would like it back'

Ace flinched at 'young lady', but let it pass.

`Who are you?'

`My friends call me Ace, but you can call me Miss'

Underwood turned as if to speak to his colleague, but turned back to Ace bringing the back of his right hand

brutally across her cheek. 'You need to learn some manners, Miss Ace. Who are you working for and where are

you from?'

Ace tasted the blood in her mouth. She fixed Underwood with a look of contempt and spat out, 'I'm from London,

and I'm not working for anyone'

`London!' exclaimed Fenton. 'She's British'

`Well, she's not working for us' Underwood turned back to Ace. 'Who are you working for?'

Ì've told you, we're not working for anyone'

Àh, yes, "we". Tell me about your accomplice - the man. Who is he?'

Ace considered this for a moment. She wouldn't gain anything from refusing to answer - and anyway, they wouldn't

be any the wiser if she did tell them 'He's called the Doctor.'

Ìs he working for the Kaiser?'

Ì've told you, we're not working for anyone - the Doctor and I are just travellers'

Ì don't believe you, Miss Ace, which is rather a pity for you. Until you do tell me something that I can believe, I'm

afraid we can make things very unpleasant for you. Consider your situation. As a British subject working for a

foreign power, you are committing treason. We can arrange for a boat back to England, a quick trial and then an

appointment with the hangman's noose. So, I'll ask you again, for whom are you working?'

Ì've told you, rat features.Are you deaf? We're not working for anyone -we're just travellers'

This insult earned Ace another vicious slap, which sent her and the chair crashing to the floor, causing the girl

to hit her head.As she drifted into unconsciousness,Ace saw the two men stalk angrily from the room.

On the landing, Fenton turned to Underwood. 'What do you think?' `Well, all of this "traveller" stuff is a load of

guff.They are working for the Germans, I would put money on it'

I'm not so sure. Either way, we've got a problem.The local police have taken the man, he had the goblet... so it's a

matter of whether we can get it back, before the Turks are persuaded to pass it on to their best friends, the

Germans. I'll pop round and visit our man in the Ministry of the Interior and see if we can do some persuading

of our own` Fenton went to leave.

What about the girl?' said Underwood.

`Leave her where she is. She might be useful`

In the police station, the Doctor, having picked himself up from the floor and dusted himself down, began

712

examining his surroundings. In truth there was not much to examine. The small cell, some eight feet by five, was lit

only by a tiny, barred, glass-less window high in one wall. With no bed or bench, the only concession to comfort was the

straw on the floor, which seemed to be the source of most of the foul smell.The door was of a heavy wooden

construction with a spy hole through which the jailor could observe his prisoner.

From an adjoining cell, the Doctor could hear the mournful singing of a fellow inmate. He settled himself down in

the straw, and pondered his predicament. At least the Krivani device had not yet given off another lethal and

possibly catastrophic energy pulse. On the other hand he no longer had it, and the next pulse could come at any

time.This intervention by the police was another complication

that he was going to have to deal with. Reasoning that

his options were severely limited, the Doctor tipped his hat forward over his eyes and began to doze.

The Doctor had been in the cell for no more than thirty minutes when the door opened and the jailor came in.

'On your feet!'

Are you looking for me?'

'On your feet now!' The jailor aimed a kick at the Doctor, who, neatly avoiding the flailing boot, jumped to his feet

'Now, fetch him!`The jailor motioned to two of his men, who seized the prisoner and half escorted, half dragged him

out of the cell and down the corridor, past a row of cells from which emerged a mixture of quiet singing, moaning

and sobbing.

A senior Turkish policeman was sitting behind the desk as the Doctor was brought into the office. Behind him stood a

westerner in a sharp suit.The Doctor was thrust down into a chair facing the desk.

'Name?'

'I'm the Doctor, how do you do?' The Doctor made to stand up and proffered a hand to shake.

'Sit!'

The Doctor withdrew the unshaken hand and sat back down.

'I am Colonel Celebi, this is Herr Roster. Do you have a name, Doctor?' 'Very well. Doctor John Smith, but I prefer

just Doctor`

`So, you are British?' Rosler's English was perfect, albeit spoken in a slight German accent.

'No, yes, no...well sort of. No, not really.' The Doctor blustered,

'Look, where's Ace?'

'Ace?' asked the Turk.

Ace, my companion, the young lady. Is she here?'

'We have no young lady here, Doctor; continued the colonel, 'but it is we who need to ask you some questions.

When you were arrested you had in your possession an important archaeological artefact. What can you tell us about

it?'

'She's not here? I must find her.You must let me go now.Your guards took a golden cup flow me; I must have it back.

We are all in terrible danger`

Ah, yes, the cup. Tell us about that, please, Doctor.'The colonel reached down, brought the goblet out from a

drawer and placed it on the desk. The Doctor made to get up and reach for it, but celebi withdrew the object.

Simultaneously from behind, a guard took the Doctor by his shoulders and pushed him back down into his seat.

The Doctor fell silent. Faced with the inevitable, he looked from the German to the Turk to the cup.As his gaze

returned to the artefact, he was alarmed to see that it was again vibrating. However, unlike before, the vibration did

not stop and the object began to glow. A look of panic spread over the Doctor's face. `Get down!' he yelled and

threw himself to the floor, as far from the table and the cup as he possibly could.

Colonel celebi and the German followed his example, which saved their lives as the artefact emitted a blinding

flash, falling with a clunk to the floor amidst the ashes of the desk. The three stood up and looked at each other in

silence, the Turk and the German with a mixture of horror and

wonder. Carefully, and without objection from his

captors, the Doctor picked up the cup - now once more inert - and returned it to his jacket pocket.

`Herr Doktor, I think we need to talk,' said the German.

celebi and Rosier, who had introduced himself only as a member of the staff of the German embassy, listened to the

Doctor's story calmly and, for the most part, in silence. When the Doctor had concluded Rosier exhaled loudly and

began pacing aroun 7

d 3 the room.

`Well, Herr Doktor, I have never heard such a wild story - aliens and starship motors that can destroy a city...

However, we are aware of the llyas Ada incident and Colonel celebi and I both saw that little demonstration

of what the artefact can do.You are clearly not working for the British - and I was watching you when that thing went

off.You were more scared than we were, so it was not something that you had arranged to impress us. No, I do not

think so. So, "when you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth"

-that is what your Sherlock Holmes would say, yes?' Roger gave a little laugh, looking mildly pleased with himself.

`Well, he's scarcely *my* Sherlock Holmes - although I might have given Arthur a nudge in the right direction on a

number of occasions...'

`Nonetheless... ' Rosier paced silently for a moment or two, deep in thought.Then, abruptly, he turned and thrust out

his hand for the Doctor to shake, bowing his head slightly to one side as the partnership was sealed.

At that moment a polite tap on the door was followed by the

entry of a young policeman, who spoke briefly in

Turkish to Celebi before saluting and going back out. 'Excuse me, gentlemen. I have a telephone call,' said celebi,

leaving the room.

`So what do you propose to do?' asked Rosier.

Ì need to get the Krivani device off your world before it does any more damage - and I need to find Ace.'

`Well, it would seem likely that the English have her, in which case she is in very real danger. Clearly they are very

aware of the value of your alien device, even if they do not know what it is and they will certainly stop at nothing to get it

back.They are unscrupulous men and the life of one girl will not concern them. I understand them, Herr Doktor. Do

not forget that they and I are in the same profession'

Ùnder most circumstances Ace can look after herself,' replied the Doctor, 'but even so, I am worried'

celebi came back in, looking concerned`Your enemies have friends in court, Herr Rosler. That was General Adivar

from the Ministry of the Interior. I am instructed to deliver both the Doctor and the item that he has stolen to the

English. I am sorry'

Rosier looked aghast.

`Sadly, I had to inform him that I had already handed my prisoner over into your care, Herr Rosler, and that as

such, the matter was now out of my hands. So, you must both leave now, quickly before either my superiors or

the English come to collect you.'

The new allies thanked the colonel profusely, before making their way out of the police station`To my house then,

Herr Doktor. Let us go!'

Hurrying down the busy street, the Doctor and Rosier found themselves surrounded by a pack of street urchins, offering

a variety of services to the apparently affluent westerners - from tours of the city to shoeshine to other less

innocuous offers.They waved all of these away, but as the boys moved on to look for other clientele, one of them

pressed something into the Doctor's hand. Before he knew what was happening, the boy had made his escape.The

Doctor looked down at the scribbled note.

Àya Sofya, 8 o'clock. Come alone, bring the goblet Acè

-

He passed it to Rosler without comment.

Ìs this your friend's handwriting?'

`No, it's not.A message from our English friends, I think'

As the sun set over the domes and minarets of the city, the song of the muezzin could be heard from every mosque in

Constantinople, calling the faithful to six o'clock prayer.

Ace was beginning to stir back into consciousness. She awoke to find herself lying on the floor, still tied to the chair.

The taste of blood in her mouth and the pain of her bruised face brought back the memories of her interrogation at the

hands of Underwood. She tested her bonds, but soon realised that the rope was not to be loosened. All hope of escape

under her own steam seemed denied. It was up to the Doctor then. She had been in this sort of predicament before -

she knew that she could count on him to mount a rescue attempt.

But no, not this time. She had forgotten: the Doctor was in the hands of the Turkish police. He was almost certainly

going through at le 7a45st as bad a time as she had - probably much worse. For all she knew, he might be dead.Ace

resumed her struggle to free herself - but still to no avail.

Gerold Rosler watched from the window overlooking the street as the

Doctor left the house and headed for his rendezvous at Sancta Sophia

Mosque. Despite the Doctor's confident demeanour and almost jaunty stride, Rosier was aware of the burden that

his new friend bore.

In the Doctor's pocket, the cup remained dormant - for now How long that would remain the case, no one could

tell.The pair had spent the early evening in the German's house, making plans. Rosier had tried to convince the

Doctor to take the alien device away immediately, to take it to his TARDIS (as he had called his ship) and to get it off

the Earth without delay.

However, the Doctor had refused. He could not take the risk of arriving at the rendezvous with her kidnappers

without the device, he had said. He seemed sure that the object was not in immediate danger of exploding - if

'exploding' was the word for the massive release of energy that they had witnessed earlier - and he would not leave

without his companion. He didn't know what they were capable of, but he feared the worst.

He was confident in his ability to secure the release of his friend, without losing the cup - somehow! Roster was

less confident

The Doctor made his way purposefully through the darkening streets. With every step he became more aware of

the alien object in his jacket pocket. His conversation with Gerold Rosler had been a difficult one.The German, mindful

of the enormous threat posed by the Krivani device, had voiced all the Doctor's own fears. Take that thing away now

Doctor,' he had pleaded. 'You know what the result could be if there is another release of energy. Even if that does not

happen, there is also the risk that the British may take it from you.That too would be catastrophic.'

Despite all of these entreaties, the Doctor had remained adamant, silencing the argument with a quiet, determined,

simple statement: Ì will not abandon my friend` He had convinced Gerold that the device would be safe for a while, but

he was by no means sure of that - it was a supposition based largely upon hope. He knew that by remaining here

with it, he was endangering the city and everyone in it, including Ace. But he would not leave her - could not leave her. It

was he who had brought her here, got her into this situation; it was up to him to get her out of it.

The Doctor quickened his pace as he approached the vast imposing domed edifice of the Sancta Sophia

Mosque. Crossing Sultanahmet Square, he entered the building.

Ace had succeeded in freeing herself. As she and the chair had been knocked to the floor, one of the wooden legs

had snapped in two, leaving a sharply edged sliver of hard wood. It was hardly a blade, but it was enough, with

patience, to saw slowly through the rope that bound her wrists - once she had manoeuvred herself and the

remnants of the seat Into a position from where she could reach the broken piece.

When her hands were free, it was only a matter of seconds to release herself completely. She jumped to her feet, at

once regretting her haste as the stiffness in her joints and the bump on her head made themselves known. Gingerly

rubbing the circulation back into her hands she carefully tried a few hesitant steps, stretching her muscles back into

life.As she did so, she was distracted from her discomfort by a noise outside the door. Before she could analyse what

she had heard, footsteps followed, crossing the landing towards her prison.

As the handle began to turn, Ace picked up the remains of the broken chair and stood behind the opening door.

From this position,Ace watched the tall blond figure of a man enter the room. It wasn't the scumbag who had beaten

her up, nor his smarmy mate, but that didn't matter. Ace wanted out and this bloke was in the way.

She swung the chair down with all of the force that she could muster, and crashed it to the floor as her intended

victim saw the danger and jumped aside. Before Ace could recover, the man had grabbed her and held her tight.

Much as Ace struggled, the greater strength of the man, together with the fallout from her beating at the hands of

Underwood and her subsequent unconsciousness proved too much for her. All of Ace's struggles to free herself had

come to nothing; she was a prisoner once more.

The bright colours of the stained glass windows pierced the darkness as the Doctor entered the great mosque - once

the greatest of all Christian churches. It took a moment for his eyes to become used to the dark.

Gradually he began to make out the arches and aisles, the massive wooden doors leading to the inner sanctums of

the building and the great domes decorated with golden mosaics by the church/mosque's Byzantine creators. The

Doctor took a moment to consider the genius of the architects of this wonderful building, who had constructed

these domes of celestial proportions, without the aid of modern materials or techniques, some fourteen

hundred years earlier. It would be a pity if he were to be the unwitting cause of the end of those centuries of history.

The device in his pocket gave a little buzz, as if to remind the Doctor to keep his mind on the job. Looking around,

he could see no one.

That's far enough, Doctor. Stay where you are,' a voice called out - a voice that he recognized as belonging to

one of the two Englishmen whose conversation he and Ace had overheard earlier. 'If you want to see the girl alive

again, that is.'

Ace stopped struggling and to her surprise felt the man's arms loosen and release her She pushed him off her and

jumped back, ready to spring should he make any threatening move.

`Fraulein Ace, I presume. Gerold Ressler, Special Agent of the German Reich at your servicè The man bowed

his head with exaggerated politeness as he spoke.

`Great,' thought AcèGermans, that's all I need!' She then took back the thought reprovingly. Her experience of

Germans came mainly from the Nazis that she had encountered on her travels with the Doctor. She reminded

herself that not all of the race were Nazis - indeed in 1914, there weren't any Nazis at all. She smiled a less-

than-encouraging hello. Èven so: she told herself, she couldn't be sure of him.

`Your friend the Doctor thought I would find you here.You must come with me'

`The Professor? You've seen him? What have you done with him? Is he okay?'

`Fraulein Ace, there will be time for all of this later - I hope. For now you must come quickly.The gentleman

who was guarding your door may not sleep for long`

Ace gave Rosler a quizzical look, but needed more convincing. 'I'm not going anywhere with you, Mush - not until

I know that the Doctor is safè

`Fraulein, the Doctor is very much not safe - and neither are we, which is why we must go now.You will come

please'

Still somewhat reluctantly,Ace followed Gerold Rosier out of the room

e. that had been her prison. As they passed the colossal form of the guard sprawled on the landing, he began to stir.

Rosler's swift blow to the back of his neck sent him back into oblivion before he could pose a threat to them

Apart from the unconscious guard, the house appeared empty; Rosler and Ace met no resistance in leaving. As

he led her through the streets, towards Sancta Sophia and her reunion with the Doctor, Rosier brought Ace up to

speed with what had been going on.

`Where is she? Let me see Acè

`You'll see her soon enough, Doctor, if you do just as we tell yoù `What is it that you want?'

`Why, the artefact of course. Have you brought it with you?' Ìt's here. Have you brought Ace?'

Ì've told you, you can have the girl when you return what you

took from us. Come forward into the open and

lay the artefact down`

The Doctor did as he was instructed, the Krivani device giving another warning buzz as he placed it carefully on

the floor. The Doctor backed away to where he had been standing before.As he did so, Underwood and Fenton

moved out of the shadows and approached the cup.

`Where is Ace? You gave your word`

Òh, you'll see her soon enough, Doctor,' replied Fenton. 'We've no use

for either of you now - but you didn't really think we would bring her here, did you?'

Òf course we did not' The answer came from Rosler. 'Which is why I have been to fetch her myself`

On cue, Ace appeared and with Rosler joined the Doctor. The two friends exchanged brief nods, which told

each one that the other was okay.

`Herr Underwood and Herr Fenton, is it not? You will please now move away from the artefact.You will not leave

here with it, my men have all of the exits covered`

`Rosler: spat Underwood. Gathering up the device, he leapt back into the shadows, followed by his associate.

`Can you see them?' asked the Doctor.

`No, we should spread out - but beware, they are probably armed' Rosier took out a handgun from inside his

jacket.

`Do try and avoid using that in here, Herr Roster`

The German nodded grimly and set off to the right, keeping in the shadows at the edge of the mosque. The

Doctor and Ace moved in the other direction, circling around the inside of the building.A shot rang out. The

Doctor and Ace looked at each other and cried out in unison:Rosler!'

Ì am okay' came the reply,'but they have got away` The Doctor and Ace sprinted across the mosque towards their

friend, as he emerged from the shadows. Rosier indicated a side door. 'We had better go after them.'

`Won't your men stop them?' asked Ace.

Rosler and the Doctor exchanged a meaningful glance. 'There are no men: explained the GermanÌ was

bluffing'

The three began the chase, but upon leaving the mosque, the closing darkness,Ace could see no clue as to the

whereabouts of the two fugitive Englishmen and their deadly cargo. The Doctor reached into his pocket and took

out the tracker. Ace and Rosler watched him study the device intently, his face lit up by the blue glow of the

screen.

`This way,' he said quietly, and led them off towards the Hippodrome. The obelisks and columns that decorated

the elongated oval of a public square were shrouded in darkness.

`There they arèThe Doctor pointed towards the ornate fountain at the far end of the Hippodrome Underwood

and Fenton made little attempt to hide, opting to try to outrun their pursuers. Rosler sprinted after them. Without

warning, Underwood and Fenton turned and opened fire. Shots ricocheted from the stonework in front of Rosier,

who dived for shelter behind an obelisk. The Doctor and Ace also took cover and watched the showdown. Rosler

fired; the gun flew out of Fenton's hand, which now hung useless by his side. Underwood was still armed: he fired

and Rosler

felt the heat of the bullet as it passed his right eat Using his wounded colleague as a shield, Underwood broke

cover and firing all the time, began to back away, towards the buildings at the edge of the square. Rosler took

aim and squeezed the trigger. Underwood reacted as the bullet bounced off the artefact in his left hand.

Underwood looked over towards Ace, a slight ironic smile playing across his features as the massive energy discharge

came.

The resultant flash caused the Doctor,Ace and Rosier to all shield their eyes. When they looked up, little remained

of the two Englishmen. The golden cup lay on the ground, still glowing with a vivid orange light.

`You must have hit the artefact: shouted the Doctor, jumping to his feet.

Having received Rosler's message, Colonel celebi was now speeding towards the mosque.As his motorcar sped

into the square, he could see R and the Doctor with a young girl, all three examining the cup, which lay on the

ground surrounded by ashes.

celebi leapt out of the car and, waving his two subordinates to stay where they were, ran over to join Rosier,

Ace and the Doctor

Ì see I've missed all the action: said the colonel. 'Is that thing safe?'

The Doctor looked up from where he had been examining the artefact, a deeply worried expression on his face.

Ì'm afraid it is most definitely not safe, Colonel.That last energy burst seems to have been different from the one we

witnessed before.The device is still very much active. It could go off at any moment. We must get it to the TARDIS

and away from the Earth, as quickly as we can.Your car Colonel?'

`Certainly, Doctor - come on`

celebi sent his men to guard what remained of the two Englishmen, and jumped into the driving seat of the cat

Rosier got in next to him, with Ace and the Doctor, clutching the still glowing artefact, behind.

The high-speed drive through the dark streets of the city took no time at all, but to the passengers of the car it

seemed a lifetime. Guided by the Doctor, celebi had no difficulty in finding the alley where the Doctor's TARDIS'

was hidden. celebi gasped in astonishment at the sight of the tall rectangular blue object, bearing the legend *Police*

Public Call Box.

`But, Doctor,' began Rosier. That can't be your... What on earth is it?'

`Not on Earth for much longer; said Ace, getting out of the car. All being well`

`No time for any of that now: said the Doctor. The device was glowing an even deeper orange and seemed to be

pulsing with barely contained energy. He turned to celebi and Rosier and shook their hands`Well, thank you very

much, Colonel, Gerold. We had better be going.' He began

unlocking the door of the police box, using a key that

he had taken from his pocketÀnd take care, both of you. There are difficult times ahead'

With that the Doctor and Ace entered the TARDIS. The door closed behind them and as the spy and the police

chief watched, a sound unlike any that either of them had ever heard rent the quiet of the alley.The blue box

gradually became less substantial and finally faded away completely, the flashing white light on top being the last

thing to disappear from view.

`*Gott in Himmel:* muttered Rosler. celebi just stood open-mouthed.

Once in the Vortex, that realm of nowhere and no-when that lies between each microsecond of time and between

each atom of the universe, the TARDIS paused in flight. The Krivani device was now giving off a deep, angry

crimson light, its vibrations having become so intense that the object was emitting a high-pitched humming

noise.

`Hold on, Ace' The Doctor and the girl both took tight hold of the console. Pulling on the prominent red-

topped lever, the Doctor opened the TARDIS door to the nothingness beyond. Ace felt the pull as that

nothingness sought to drag her from the ship, but her hold was strong and the door was only open long enough

for the Doctor to hurl the last remnant of a long-dead civilisation into the Vortex. No sooner had he pulled on

the lever once more and closed the doors, than the TARDIS was rocked by a monumental explosion.The Doctor and

Ace were thrown to the floor, Ace adding to the bruises that she had garnered earlier in the day. They were safe -

and so was the Earth, for now The travellers picked themselves up.

The TARDIS had rematerialized in a high geostationary orbit above the Eastern Mediterranean. On the scanner,

Ace could make out the lights of Constantinople. 'We nearly didn't make it, did we, Professor?'

`No, Ace, we were lucky'

`You know, Professor, that was well strange'

`What was,Ace?'

`Well, having to fight against the British, with a German spy helping us out'

The Doctor chuckled. 'There were no *goodies* or *baddies* in early-twentieth-century Earth politics, Ace - just

competing empires, each trying to outdo their rivals. We were lucky to find an ally in Gerold, who was prepared

to believe the truth when he saw it'

Ace returned her gaze to the seamier. 'It looks deceptively peaceful down therè

`Most planets look peaceful from space. Down there ... ' he pointed over towards the Balkan peninsula,'...a young

man called Gavrillo Princip is already plotting an assassination that will set in motion a train of events that will

fan the flames of a series of quite trivial disputes, ensnaring the

nations of the Earth into one of the bloodiest wars that your world will have ever seen. And that war will just be

the opening shots of a century and more of war, bloodshed, slaughter and barbarism. It's a pity that your planet -

and many others too - could not learn the lessons of the Krivani'

`What happens to Rosler and celebi?'

`Who knows? The war will prove disastrous for Germany, many of its best young men will die on the

battlefields of Flanders and the country will be defeated and bankrupted. Perhaps Gerold will survive, perhaps he

won't. Turkey will take the side of Germany, the Empire will be lost and the Sultan overthrown. After a bitter

civil war, a republic will be established under Atatiirk - a very great man celebi has enough about him to fmd

a place for himself in the new order - if he survives the war, that is`

The Doctor fell sil 81

ent. Ace continued watching the tranquil blue planet on the screen for a moment, and then

turned to go to her room. Wishing her goodnight, the Doctor switched off the scanner and set the TARDIS controls

for dematerialization.The ship prepared to take them to the next planet that would also look peaceful from space.As

she left the room,Ace glanced back at her friend and thought she saw the suspicion of a tear in the corner of the

Doctor's eye.

The Thief of Sherwood

Jonathan Morris

At one time, I suggested giving the Doctor an adventure where be met Robin Hood!'

- William Hartnell

***Radio* Times, x9 September 1964**

5.15

CAROLE ANN FORD

DR. WHO

The Deserted Castle

An adventure in space and time starring

by GODFREY PORTER

WILLIAM HARTNELL WILLIAM RUSSELL

Dr.Who..... WILLIAM HARTNELL

JACQUELINE HILL and

Ian Chesterton..... WILLIAM RUSSELL

DR. WHO

Barbara Wright.....JACQUELINE HILL

and the Outlaws

Susan Foreman..... CAROLE ANN FORD

Little John..... ARCHIE DUNCAN

Wil Scarlet..... RONALD HINES

We all know that it is impossible to wind back the hands of

Sheriff of Nottingham. .FRANK THORNTON

history -and equally impossible for us to launch ourselves

Maid Marion..... ANNEKE WILLS

into the realms of future space. Impossible for us - but not for

Peddler..... MILTON JOHNS

Vilager..... CARL BERNARD

the strange old gentleman of time and space, Dr. Who

Man-at-arms..... IVOR COLIN

(William Hartnell) - who has no problem in travelling to far-

Title music by RoN GRAINER

flung worlds or through time to the dark days of twelfth-

with the BBC Radiophonic Workshop Incidental music composed and

century Sherwood.

conducted by HARPER C. BASSETT

Story editor, David Whitaker

Such is the setting for Saturday's instalment of a new tale

Designer, Barry Newbery

for the Doctor and his group. Written by G o d f r e y

Associate producer, Mervyn Pinfield Producer, VERITY LAMBERT

P o r t e r , t h e s t o r y i s essentially a re-telling of the Robin

Directed by PATRICK WHITFIELD

Is the castle as deserted as it appears? Or is it a trap for the unwary

Hood myth - the travellers become involved in a case of

traveller?

mistaken identity which leads them to the dungeons of the

infamous Sheriff of Nottingham. The story does not affect

the course of history but instead utilises it as a

thrilling backdrop for adventure.

Radio Times Doctor Who loth Anniversary Special, 5973

83

The Bandits

The TARDIS lands in the dungeons of Nottingham castle. Ian and Susan are captured and brought before the Sheriff.

The others are captured by bandits and taken to Sherwood Forest

where they discover that Robin Hood is Ian's

double.The Merry Men elect to rescue Ian and Susan but the attempt fails and Robin is killed. The Doctor saves

Susan from execution by posing as a monk. Ian gives away all of Robin's loot.

'Doctor *Who* — Story *Nine',* Doctor Who Weekly issue 26,198o
THE THIEVE OF SHERWOOD

This six-part adventure was first shown on BBC television on September 19th, 1964.

The TARDIS has recently journeyed through the fourth and fifth dimensions. From their positions by the controls

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the Doctor, Susan, Ian and Barbara watch the scanner. They have landed in sheer darkness!

They emerge into a dungeon cell.A skeleton is chained to the wall! 'That was a human being. We are on Earth!'

proclaims the Doctor. They decide to split up to explore. The Doctor and Barbara go upstairs and discover they

are in a deserted medieval castle.

Ian and Susan, meanwhile, meet a pretty young girl called Marion being held prisoner. Ian attempts to force the

door to her cell, but the lock is too strong. He heads back to the TARDIS for cutting tools, but discovers that the

door to that cell is now also locked.They are not alone...

The Doctor and Barbara reach a nearby village. The houses are all boarded up and the occupants live in fear

for their lives.

Back in the dungeons, the man-at-arms who watched Ian and Susan meets with the Sheriff of

Nottingham.'Your plan has succeeded, my Lord!' he says. 'The

bandits have entered the castle!'

Ian and Susan are shocked when a portcullis drops, trapping them. Suddenly soldiers emerge from every door

and passageway. It is a trap!

The Doctor and Barbara attempt to return to the castle... but are caught by a gang of bandits who take them to

their hideout in Sherwood forest. 'Unhand me,' cries the Doctor. 'This is no way to treat a Gallifreyan!'

The bandits identify themselves as Little John and Will Scarlet. Barbara guesses they are being taken to meet

Robin Hood! The Doctor is more sceptical.'Robin Hood is a myth. He is no more real than Sherlock Holmes!'

But the Doctor is proved wrong when they arrive at the outlaw's lair.Their leader, Robin Hood, steps out of the

shadows.And he looks exactly like Ian!

'Doctor Who Episode Guide',

Doctor Who Monthly issue 51,1981

THE OUTLAWS

ever nearer.

(Serial 1, 6 episodes)

Errand Of Mercy (10th October 1964)

The Deserted Castle (19th September 1964)

The Merry Men's rescue attempt has failed, and Robin and

Susan have sought sanctuary in the castle dungeons. But

A hushed silence falls over the forest clearing as the

they are discovered by the Sheriff's guards and Susan is

Doctor and Barbara await the arrival of the murderous

horrified as Robin is run through with a sword.

bandit leader, Robin Hood. They are shocked when

Robin is revealed to be Ian's double!

Ransom

(17th October 1964)

The Thief Of Sherwood (26th September 1964)

Ian (posing as Robin) has agreed to meet the Sheriff to

Learning that he has Robin prisoner in his dungeons, the

arrange Susan's release. As he enters the peddler's shop, he

Sheriff of Nottingham orders his execution. But it is Ian

discovers the owner's corpse and realises that he has

who is placed in the stocks. The man-at-arms raises his

entered a trap.The door opens and a shadowy figure

axe...

approaches Ian's hiding place.

The Alchemist (3rd October 1964)

A Guest For The Gallows (24th October 1964)

The Doctor convinces the Sheriff that he can create

In the forest clearing, Ian has returned Robin Hood's gold

gold. But it is a ruse, and using gunpowder, the Doctor

to the villagers, and the four travellers have returned to

blows the door of the workshop off its binges. But he is

the TARDIS. As the take-off sound begins, the Doctor

knocked unconscious by the explosion, as the flames lick

warns of a build-up of 'space pressure' outside...

`Gal ifrey *Guardian',*

Doctor Who Monthly issue 69, 1982

THIEFS RE-CAPTU 8

R 5

ED!

A television station in Cyprus has returned three prints from the missing William Hartnell story 'The Theives

Of Sherwood' to the BBC film archive at Windmill Lane.

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The prints comprise parts 1, 2 and 4 of this classic adventure where the Doctor encounters Robin Hood and the

Sheriff of Nottingham. Part 6 is already held by the archive, but parts 3 and 5 remain sadly missing, but BBC

archive selector Sue Malden remains hopeful of more Doctor Who episode finds in the future.

Doctor Who - *A Celebration,* 1983 The Thief of Sherwood

Billed in the BBC press handout as a 'thrilling adventure with Robin Hood', this story followed in the tradition

of the serials *Ivanhoe* and *William Tell.* However, it was also a sophisticated and witty exploration of how legends

might arise.

Landing in the dungeons of Nottingham castle during the time of the Crusades, Ian and Susan are captured by

the Sheriff. The Doctor and Barbara meet the less-than-philanthropic Robin Hood, who turns out to be the exact

double of Ian. The Doctor plans to negotiate his companion's release by offering the Sheriff the secret of alchemy.

When Robin is killed, Ian substitutes for him and leads the Merry Men in an attempt to rescue Susan before she is

executed.The Doctor intervenes at the last moment, posing as the priest giving the last rites, and Ian returns the

bandits' plunder to the villagers, thereby creating the myth of Robin Hood.

Radio *Times* Doctor Who

loth Anniversary Special, 1983

The Thief of Sherwood was an intelligently scripted piece of historical adventure, with Ian playing a dual role,

himself and Robin Hood, who was Ian's double. Robin Hood was depicted as a villain, and when he is killed, Ian

replaces him and seals his reputation.

Doctor Who — The Thief of Sherwood,

Target Novelisation, Godfrey Porter, x986

First Extract from the Letters of Barbara Wright

Should I ever return to your front room, Auntie Margaret, what a story I would have to tell! Ever since I was

shanghaied into time and space by the Doctor, my life has been a succession of unsavoury disasters. Poisoned by

radiation, hailed as a goddess, possessed by an alien brain and let down by a Frenchman, nothing could have

prepared me for my current ordeal.

Kidnapped by a band of uncouth, unwashed and unshaven bandits, I found myself thrust into their dismal

forest lair, a collection of makeshift tents camouflaged by foliage. My wrists were chafed by bondage and my ankles

ached from walking the miles from Nottingham to Sherwood. I collapsed at the feet of an exceptionally

malodorous figure and found myself at the unfriendly, not to mention business, end of a crossbow. But although I

was hungry, tired and soaked to the skin, my spirits remained undampened as I thought of happier times and

places, and in particular of your toasted buttered muffins.

You may recall me mentioning one of my colleagues, Mr Ian Chesterton. You recommended him to me during one

muffin encounter as a 'very eligible young man'.Well, as I looked up I discovered that the figure at the friendly end of

the crossbow was the exact double of that very eligible young man.Admittedly his hair was bedraggled and his chin

was bearded, and his cheeks were smeared in mud, but otherwise it could have been the Ian with whom you once

enjoyed several steaming mugs of Ovaltine.

In my confusion, I asked him in what boys' play-acting game he was indulging. He responded in a thick brogue

that I should not speak unless ordered to. I quickly realised that this was not my Ian, but perhaps one of his less

salubrious ancestors.

Despite our predicament, my companion, the Doctor, had lost none of his gumption. He travelled the universe

as though inspecting a rather dissatisfactory country garden. Upon learning that the name of our lime-garbed

companion was Robin Hood, he tutted like a parakeet.

`My dear sir,' ejaculated the Doctor. 'Whomsoever you might be, you are not Robin Hood. Robin Hood is a

character originating, I believe, from the ballads of the late middle ages!'

Robin responded to the Doctor's outburst pointedly with his crossbow. Ì am Robin Hood,' he snarled. 'The

most feared, most deadly outlaw of them all! I pillage, I murder, I show no mercy. Not to the King's men, nor his

citizens, nor quacking old beggars!'

`Who are you calling *old?'* snapped the DoctorÌ would have you know I am in my prime.' His fingered his

lapels like a barrister in an Ealing

comedy 'So you are Robin Hood are you? Hmm. So do you steal from the rich and give to the poor?'

There was an incredulous silence. And then a roar of laughter rocked the glade.

`Give to the poor, lads?' he shouted. 'Why should we do that? We steal from the poor too!'

Archive: The Thief Of Sherwood', Doctor Who Magazine issue 103, 1985

EPISODE THREE

Ian's life is spared when the castle receives a new visitor - the Doctor, posing as an apothecary to King John. The

Doctor tells him that he is on his way to tell the King of a means to turn base substances into gold. He will grant

the Sheriff the secret in return for Ian's safe release. The Sheriff greedily agrees.

The Merry Men then recapture Barbara and the peddler. He is forced to tell them about the secret passageway

into the castle. Robin decides he will go with little John to rescue Marion. But in the tunnel they are ambushed

by guards. Robin is left for dead.

little John is brought before the Sheriff and forced to reveal the location of the bandits' hideout. He is locked

up with Ian, who he cannot believe is not his friend Robin.

In the meantime, the Sheriff sends his men to Sherwood to kill the Merry Men. He then visits the Doctor in

the castle workshop. The Doctor is about to demonstrate how he will turn charcoal, saltpetre and sulphur into

gold.As the Sheriff watches, the Doctor sets light to the mixture.The resultant explosion blows the workshop

doors off their hinges and knocks the Doctor and the Sheriff unconscious. The workshop is filled with flames.

***Ìnterview: Godfrey* Porter', Doctor Who *Magazine* issue 172, 1991**

After demob, I returned to Oxford to finish my history degree. I studied mediaeval literature, which would later

stand me in good stead on *Doctor Who:*

Godfrey entered television scriptwriting by an unusual route. 'My landlord was working as a writer on a

series called *William Tell,* and in lieu of rent I would occasionally fill in bits of script for him. When he moved on

from the show, he recommended me to the producer. So after that I did some scripts for ATV, an adventure series

called *Longboat* which was about the Vikings.

`That was huge fun, and I edited some shows for ATV, and then along came *Doctor Who.*

Ì had to do it. My kids wouldn't believe I was a writer unless I did a *Doctor Who.* We'd all been watching it since the

one with the Daleks. I knew David [Whitaker] through the Screenwriters' Guild, and suggested *a* Robin Hood story

Ì'd watched William Hartnell, who I thought had been very good in *Brighton Rock. I* liked him. He was very

professional, but he could be short-tempered with less experienced actors. But he was always charming to me. I didn't

realise he was ill, I thought that was the acting.

`The idea was to do a serial set in the past, but to make it a mixture of fact and fiction.To explore how legends might

be shaped on the basis of second-hand accounts. For a children's show, it was quite sophisticated.

After *Doctor Who* I worked at Rediffusion, writing a series called *The Long Arm* which was a precursor of *Z Cars. I*

then did some editing work on *Compact* and a couple of episodes of *The Challengers* with Dennis Spooner.'

Godfrey did submit one more idea to the *Doctor Who* production team, during the 1970s. 'There was one I wrote called

***Doctor Who and the Sprites.* It would have been for Tom Baker, but the script editor at the time wasn't keen, so I never**

finished it.'

***The* Discontinuity Guide, Virgin Publishing, 1995 DIALOGUE TRIUMPHS**

Sheriff of Nottingham - 'You claim to practice alchemy?' Doctor - 'Practice? Never, my dear sir - I am a

professional!'

n **Barbara - 'Historian8s9**

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never let facts get in the way of a good story.' FLUFFS

William Hartnell - 'I will turn these base substances into pure coal!' TRIVIA

The role of Marion was taken by Anneke Wills, who in 1966 would be cast as the Doctor's companion, Polly

William Harwell was absent from the recording of episodes four and five due to illness, necessitating a last-minute

script re-write.

Each episode was structured so that William Russell's costume and make-up changes could take place during

recording breaks.

GOOFS

The TARDIS landing sound can be heard after it has materialized.

When Robin wakes up after being knocked unconscious, he is in a different tunnel.

After the gaoler has locked Susan in with Maid Marion, the cell door swings open.

Robin's accent and moustache vary from episode to episode.

Much of the story is historically and geographically inaccurate.
FASHION VICTIM

Robin's costume is replete with a leather jerkin and peacock-feathered cap.

***Doctor Who: The Television* Companion,**

BBC Books, 1998

ANALYSIS

Perhaps aware that a Robin Hood action adventure serial may be beyond the constraints of *Doctor Who's* budget,

Godfrey Porter decorated his scripts with occasional vignettes of comical humour - perhaps most conspicuously in

the whimsical digression of the Doctor bluffing as an incompetent and hapless alchemist. He also avoided concentrating on

the physical action sequences, instead making the story a farce of mistaken identity and circumlocution and an

exploration into how modern myths and romances may arise.

`What makes this story is Robin's characterisation, documented Gary Russell in the second issue of *Shada* dated

January 1981`William Russell gives one of his finer performances in the dual role of Robin and Ian, making Robin an

unsympathetic and callous treat. The only drawback is the "trouble-up-at-t mill" accent he adopts'

The production, whilst not perhaps revisiting the glories of the preceding historicals, was quite good. The finished

product is polished if lacking in scale, though Barry Newbery's detailed and richly textured sets are deserving of being

singled out for special attention.

All things considered, whilst not an undisputed classic, *The Thief of Sherwood* is something of a curate's egg.

***The* Time Team', Doctor Who Magazine issue 285, 1999**

EPISODES *(P 46* TO DS3

sense. When he learns the whereabouts of Robin's den

ie Team have assembled at Peter's he sends all his guards to destroy it, leaving the castle

unguarded'

for another eigh 9t 1exciting episodes

`He does only have two guards, to be fair,' muses

of monochrome magic. As Peter

T

Peter. Ian returns to the hideout where the Merry Men

sends young Harry to bed, Clayton, Jac and Richard

are not feeling quite so merry, believing their leader to be

return to the edge of their seats, where they had been

dead. Until Ian dons the legendary feathered cap. 'It's

left sitting by the previous instalment, *Errand Of Mercy*. very touching seeing Ian reunited with Barbara,' says

`Robin Hood is dead!' gasps Clayton`But he can't be! He Jac. 'She was obviously attracted to Robin, as he was

was a real historical figure, like Marco Polo and the

Ian with a bit of rough thrown in, but with Ian it's true

Scarlet Pimpernel!'

love'

Jac corrects Clayton`No, he's fictional. That's what this

The Sheriff's latest nonsensical plan is to exchange

story is all about.And the Scarlet Pimpernel wasn't

Susan for Robin. The venue is, conveniently, the

real either.'

peddler's shop. 'Everything happens in that shop!' snorts

`He *was,'* protests Clay. 'If he's not real, then who

Peter. Ì'm surprised he keeps that secret passage of his

killed The Hunchback Of Notre Dame?'

secret, what with everyone popping in and out all the

Peter returns with a cheeky dry chardonnay`What I

time!'

like about this story is that you're always watching it

It is good to see him back, though,' says Jac. 'He is a

with a view to how the mythology built up afterwards.

wonderfully devious character.'

Very clever`

`Yes; adds Clay as a packet of Wotsits explodes over

'It is very self-referential,' agrees Jac. 'The story is

his lap. `Milton Johns, you've been gone too long.'

almost a postmodern deconstruction'

But when Ian enters the shop, he discovers the

Richard breaks his silenceÌ wish there were more

peddler has peddled his last. Ian ducks for cover as a

monsters. And there is too much talking about stuff

cloaked figure enters the shop...

that we don't seè

Ìt's Billy!' shout the Team in unison at the beginning

For *Ransom,* it's back to the crackly tape recording.

of *A Guest For The Gallows.* 'But where has he been for

Jac has some reservations. The Sheriff's plan makes no the last two episodes?' complains Peter. `The last we saw

of him he was coughing and falling through a window into the castle moat!'

Archive: The Thief Of Sherwood', Doctor Who Magazine issue 332, 2003

A GUEST FOR THE GALLOWS

IN PRODUCTION

he Doctor warns that Ian has walked into a trap.

est For The Gallows was recorded on Friday

Sure enough, the Sheriff's guards emerge from

T

25 ptember at Riverside Studio 1; main

w

the secret passage. The Sheriff decides to

recording took place between 8.00 and

execute Susan in the village square the following

9.45pm. The episode began with a reenactment of the

morning. Returning to the camp, Ian, Barbara and the

previous week's cliffhanger, but without Milton Johns

Doctor learn of the Sheriff's plan from Maid Marion. Still

reprising his role. The opening title captions were

posing as Robin, Ian strikes a bargain with the villagers.

superimposed over eight feet of 35mm stock film of

The next morning, Susan is brought before the

woodland taken from *The Norman Conquest*& A

gallows and a priest administers the last rites.

recording break was scheduled before the execution

However, before the execution can begin, the villagers

sequence to allow Harwell to change into the priest's

and the Merry Men attack and the priest reveals

habit, and a second break allowed the regular cast to

himself to be the Doctor. The Sheriff flees, deciding that

move to the TARDIS set.

it would be safer to join the

Unfortunately the fight sequence caused some

crusades.

parts of the cramped set to visibly shake! The Sheriff's

As the villagers celebrate, Ian rewards them for their

escape on horseback utilised the footage that had

help by handing them the bandits' gold. From now on,

been pre-filmed at Ealing nine weeks earlier on

the bandits and villagers will work together. Marion

35mm. The TARDIS dematerialisation was achieved

says her farewells to Ian and promises to keep Robin's

using an inlay effect, and the episode ended with the

memory alive. It will be her love-struck and ill-informed

caption `Next Episode: Planet Of Giants'.

accounts of Robin Hood that form the legend.

During editing, a single cut was made to *A Guest*

Inside the TARDIS, the Doctor sets the controls for

***For The Gallows* at the end of the rescue sequence to**

1964, but the fault locator warns of a

remove a shot of a collapsing scenery flat! This removed

build up of space pressure outside...

the final lines from the scene where it is hinted that the

Doctor may leave Earth without Barbara or Ian`You

***The Thief of Sherwood* was marketed by BBC**

promised to get them home: replies Susan`You made that
Enterprises as a set of 16mm film recordings. Australia

promise to me, too, Grandfather.'

purchased the serial in

***The Thief Of Sherwood* was previewed in a half-page**

May 1965 and rated it 'A, though after removing the *Radio Times* feature headlined *' DR WHO and the* sequence of Robin's death it was revised for `G'. It was *Outlaws';* it was first broadcast in November 1965. The serial was also illustrated with a photograph of Robin, Susan and the purchased in 1965 by Hong Kong, Jamaica, Nigeria, Doctor. The serial was praised in *The Daily Sketch,* Singapore and Zambia; in 1966 it was sold to Cyprus, whilst a letter *on Junior Points Of View* indicated that Kenya, New Zealand and to Saudi Arabia in the early the historical inaccuracies of the serial had provoked a 1970s. By 1974, BBC Enterprises had withdrawn the story lively classroom discussion. The *Morning Star* was more from sale and the prints were junked.

critical, wishing for a return of the 'villainous Dalek On Wednesday 17 August 1967, all six 405-line master creatures from outer-space'. The BBC board of tapes were cleared for wiping. The BBC Film Library managers were concerned about the storyline retained a 16mm print of *A Guest For The Gallows;* in seeming too frivolous, and Kenneth Adam, Director of 1982, Cyprus returned *The Deserted Castle, The Thief* Television, said that his three-year-old daughter thought

of Sherwood and a slightly trimmed print of *Errand Of*
history adventures were silly because 'you always knew
Mercy.A complete fan-made audio recording survives,
they would end happily'.
along with some poor quality silent 8mm extracts
Early episodes of the serial ran opposite the end of the
filmed off-screen from the Australian transmissions.
ITV shows *Thank Your Lucky Stars* and *Hawkeye And*
These include clips of the Doctor preparing the
The Last Of The Mohicans (ATV London).The ratings
gunpowder and the Sheriff questioning Barbara. A
were weak at first but improved due to the move to a
version of *A Guest For The Gallows* with an Arabic
5.30pm time slot.
soundtrack also exists in a

private collection.
BBC's unofficial 'Restoration Team' and released on a
In 2004, *The Thief of Sherwood* was cleaned up by the
BBC video, with linking narration by William Russell
substituting for the missing instalments.
With thanks to Gary Gillatt, the Time Team and *Andrew* Pixley,
to whom this story is *dedicated.*
Come Friendly Bombs...

Dave Owen

Friday

The town of Reading, o thought, was the only thing to be exactly as she had expected. So far, she had been as

surprised by this march she was on as she had been on any of her far longer forays with the Doctor. Now that he

could control their destinations, she had hoped to be less taken aback by their ports of call, especially when he

had offered to take her on what he called a 'proving trip' to anywhere she liked.

After thinking about it for a day or two, during which she had briefly contemplated, and then swiftly

dismissed as a terrible idea, in no particular order, visiting her ancestors inTudor times, seeing how the West was

really won, meeting the Mata Hari, and going to a Beatles concert, she had surprised herself as much as the Doctor

by asking him to take here, a mere forty miles west and twenty years back from UNIT HQ.

Aldermaston, Jo?' he had asked. 'Ban the Bomb, and all that?' He had often teased her about her flirtations

with flower power when she was in fact, as he keenly reminded her, an employee of the Ministry of Defence. Are

these the first stirrings of a political conscience, Miss Grant?'

`Well, sort of,' she admitted. 'But I've been wondering about the peace movement since I was a teenager. We'd

see the students in America protesting against the Vietnam war on the news, and all my dad could say was that

he'd seen it all before. But *I* hadn't! He said there were a hundred thousand people on the CND march in 1960. I

want to know why it was so important for them then, when it isn't now'

`Very well, o.At least you want to see things for yourself! That's a start,' he had sparkled, after his initial

bemusement.

And so, now she found herself ambling through Reading late on a Good Friday afternoon, surrounded by what

seemed a good-natur 9e5d collection of people, of all ages and backgrounds. It was a far cry from the pictures on the

news of hairy protesters being dragged across campus by National Guardsmen, although Jo kept reminding herself

that that was all in the future. For now, their predecessors simply walked and sang, the policemen present

simply to keep the traffic *(so* little of it!) safely to their right.

That morning, they had left the TARDIS in the woods near Aldermaston, six miles southwest of Reading. At first

Jo was confused: 'Didn't they march *to* Aldermaston, Doctor?'

`Yes, they did! At first, that is. But then the organisers realised there would be many more people in London to

see the march arriving, so after 1958 they starting going the other way.' It seemed obvious, but then so did everything

once the Doctor had explained it.

Following at first a dubious handful, and then a definite gathering of people, the Doctor and Jo had found

themselves in a field opposite a pub called The Falcon.There were overnight tents, stalls selling tea and snacks, and a

small fleet of lorries, being piled high with rucksacks, sleeping bags, cases and blankets. Cars were arriving,

depositing passengers and their baggage, and so were coaches, which, judging by their banners

proclaiming them to be from local branches of CND throughout the country, must have left in the middle of the

previous night. It all seemed very finely orchestrated. An alarming thought struck Jo. Ì won't need a membership

card or anything, will I?' she asked.

The Doctor grinned. I doubt it, Jo. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament's only just getting started.

They'll probably ask you to join up, though - just don't tell them you work for the Brigadier!'

Shortly after lunchtime, the first of the marchers, led by an incongruous Co-op van had left the Falcon field in

silence, taking the road towards the village of Burglifield.The Doctor and Jo, not being affiliated as yet with any

particular group, slipped in as inconspicuously as they could, although in truth the occasion seemed far more

attention-worthy than any individual present. Jo's sweater and duffel coat seemed to blend in with the

marchers' attire, and it was only the Doctor's cape that seemed to raise an occasional eyebrow, his shock of white

hair being quite *de rigour* amongst the protesters.

As they left, Jo took one last opportunity to glance back at the reason they were all there - the Atomic Weapons

Research Establishment, which seemed utterly at odds with the surrounding countryside and buildings, looking like

a cross between a comprehensive school and an oil refinery. It was an oppressive-looking place like those where

her adventures with the Doctor always seemed to end, and even though she was not expecting any of *that*

particular sort of excitement in the following days, she nevertheless felt glad to be leaving it behind her.

Her spirits were soon lifted by a trad jazz band striking up on the back of a lorry a hundred yards or so ahead.

She had expected the marchers to be earnestly chanting slogans,

like the strikers and campaigners of her time,

but this was more of a holiday atmosphere. It was Easter weekend, after all, she supposed. Many of the marchers

around them seemed to know each other, and Jo was beginning to get the uncomfortable feeling she had had at

school open evenings, walking around with her parents, awkwardly worrying that her Dad might say something

embarrassing in front of her friends, or worse, teachers. She couldn't keep up the usual

trick of making pretend small talk with her time-travelling 'Uncle' all weekend, when they hadn't even agreed

what his name was supposed to be, could she? They lapsed into silence.

Eventually salvation came, all five feet three inches (including beret and walking boots) of it, inching up on the far

side of the Doctor, and breaking the ice with a tentative musical query. `Keen on this sort of thing are you?' asked the

man, who looked a bit like a Viennese psychiatrist on a nature ramble, gesturing towards the players.

Òh, yes!' enthused the Doctor. 'Did you think I might not be?'

Ì have to say, you do look as though you're more ready for a night out at the opera than a Dizzy Gillespie

showcase'

`My dear fellow, appearances can be deceptive.Although I must admit, I acquired this cape in Venice, for the

premiere of *Rigoletto.'*

Ìn which case,' chuckled the man, 'you must be a very well-preserved hundred-and-fifty-year-old`

`Well, I told you appearances could be deceptive.'They all laughed, the ice broken.

The Doctor soon struck up an amiable enough sparring partnership with his new friend, who introduced

himself as Bernard Heimann, a tutor In philosophy at Oxford. He had driven some of his students down for the

march and joined in, in the hope of some lively debate. Jo was certain he was going to get more than he had

been expecting. This was the opportunity she had been waiting for. As soon as Bernard had needed to rest a

while to gather his b 9

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eath and thoughts, Jo mentioned to the Doctor that she would keep going and see him when

they got to Reading, and carried on.

It felt exhilarating to be walking on her own though the past, even with the Doctor half a mile back down the road

behind her. Normally she never had time to take in her surroundings on their travels - there always seemed to

be a planet that needed to be saved from some monstrous threat. The euphoria of the moment overtook her,

and she giggled uncontrollably as she realised that that was precisely what everyone around her was trying to

do.

'I'm glad you can see the funny side of it all, dear,' came a voice from beside Jo. It belonged to a grey-haired lady,

looking for all the world like her grandmother on a trip to the bingo, except for the stout brogues and woollen

climber's socks.

Jo blushed. I'm sorry - I didn't mean to... '

`Don't worry, love, you mustn't get too precious about this caper. You spend all year at ruddy meetings

planning it as like it were the next crusade, but when we get here, it *is* just a few days out in the country. after

all'

'Oh, are you...?'

Joan, dear. Regional Secretary Lambeth branch.Those are the rest of my bunch up therè She indicated a group

ahead carrying a banner bearing the ubiquitous circular CND peace symbol and the name of their branch. Joan

seemed an unlikely campaign leader, thought Jo.Although there was a decent turnout of older ladies and

gentlemen, she had thought the leading lights would be politicians, students, or trade unionists. Here was someone

who looked more like she'd come along to serve tea and tell everyone to wrap up properly while she was at it. Jo

immediately decided that if she were as active as Joan when she was her age, she'd be properly proud of herself.

Beaming widely, *she* extended her hand.

Jo Grant, erm - independent!'

`Well then, you'd best stop being independent and come and join us.' And so, she did.

They marched through Burghfield, approaching Reading from the south. Families watched as they traversed

the suburbs, and then, not quite bringing traffic to a halt, they passed though Market Street in the centre, past the

old church, and the older-looking pubs. The brand names and fashions in the shop windows stirred childhood

memories for Jo, as did the pre-decimalised currency in which everything was priced. She had been beginning

to wonder where they would spend the night, and so discreetly eavesdropping, learned that sympathetic

parishes had made their church and school halls available. And so, as evening fell, the Lambeth and District

branch of the fledgling Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and its unlikely latest recruit, United Nations

Intelligence Taskforce Special Operative Josephine Grant prepared to bed down on the floor of a church hall

near to the Huntley and Palmer biscuit factory.

Joan had ensured that everyone was adequately fed and watered, and that Jo, and the handful of others they

had picked up along the way, were adequately provisioned. Sleeping bags and blankets were laid out across the

hall. 'This always reminds me of the Blitz,' observed Joan, uncharacteristically flatly

`Were you in London during the War?' asked Jo.

`Yes, we were. Me and Bill lived in the East End. I was caught in an air raid and had to spend the night in the

shelter at friends. I came home the following morning, and, well, there wasn't much of home to come home to

really. It was quick for him, that's one thing you can say.' She smiled, stoically and joylessly. Jo guessed she had

had a couple of decades' practice at putting on her brave face.

I'm sorry' It was all she could say.

He was just one of the unlucky ones. The trouble is, it's only the lucky ones and their children who are alive

today.They think that because they could get through the Blitz, and a bit of hardship afterwards, they could get

through anything. These new H-bombs are thousands of times more

powerful than anything Hitler could throw at us. Do you know, I think they actually feel safer knowing that

Macmillan's paying for that place back there to make the filthy things for us. Well, that's why I'm here, for one -

get in the papers, on the television even. Shake the dozy buggers up a bit!' Joan had regained her spirits, it seemed.

And your lot are no better!' she jibed at Didier, a student from France who had been marching with them.

Ìs it my fault if de Gaulle wants to play with his toys in the Sahara? Believe me, we will be marching against him

this time next year.' He was referring to France's first nuclear test, which he had earlier told Jo was conducted just

eight weeks ago. Jo had grown up with the bomb, and compared with some of the nasties she and the Doctor

had faced, it seemed an invisible, almost reassuring fact of life. But to these people, the world was changing, quickly

and unacceptably, they were standing up for what they believed in, just like the oppressed people she and the

Doctor had stood alongside on alien worlds or in different times, she supposed.

"That's the spirit, Monsieur! If we just make enough fuss they'll realise that Hitler's V2s were pinpricks

compared to what was dropped on Japan in 1945. They killed over ten thousand in two days, and as many again

since. And they haven't stopped there, either. This new H-bomb is a thousand times worse.You do see that,

don't you, dear?'

Jo was speechless. She thought of all the death she'd seen with the Doctor. All sorts of people: innocent,

misguided, or just greedy, not to mention soldiers in the line of fire; but there had never been more than a handful.

She'd never even considered the thought of hundreds of

thousands of people dying all at once.And it had

happened right here on Earth, just a few years before she was born. How could this have just been a piece of

history to her? She suspected that Joan and Didier had staged their conversation just to stir up her feelings, but

even if they had, she couldn't blame them. Jo knew she had to do something; either here or back in her own

time. Thinking about the possible future Earth in ruins she had visited, she was reminded that the Doctor had

prevented it from becoming history.

The lights were being switched off in the hall now, and Jo made herself comfortable in her borrowed sleeping bag,

finding the floor astonishingly welcoming after the steady walk and the country air. Nearby, a candle was snuffed out,

and a strident male voice drifted over.

- I don't care if the war in japan had dragged on," she said. "I'd still =invent the bloody thing if I could." But

you can't, can you? You can't put the genie back in the bottleÌt was the last thing Jo heard before falling Instantly

asleep.

Saturday

Before setting off again the following morning,Jo tried to find the Doctor, and as luck would have it, found him in

animated conversation with an intense-eyed man in an overcoat smoking a pipe. He looked oddly familiar to Jo, and

she suddenly realised that he was destined to serve as a cabinet minister in her own time. He left after a few moments.

`You know who that was, don't you, Doctor?'

Ìnteresting chap - didn't tell me his name. Seemed a bit full of himself.' 'Oh, never mind. Did you and Bernard

enjoy yourselves last night?' Òh, splendidly! But I think he only came along because these people

are led by another philosopher.'

`Bertrand Russell?'

`You have been doing your homework Jo. But I can see there's something bothering you. Come on, spit it out'

`Well. I just, wondered, Doctor. The TARDIS is working properly again, isn't she?'

Ì got you here, didn't I?'

`Well then, wouldn't it be easy to go back another twenty years and stop Oppenheimer inventing the atomic bomb?'

`You know I can't change history, Jò

`But you'd save hundreds of thousands of innocent people. You'd do it in our time, if the Master or someone were

pointing another Nerve Gas missile. Wouldn't you?'

Òf course, Jo, of course. But that's different. I was stranded in your time - it was as much the present to me as

much as it was to you.'

Jo tried another tack. 'You've changed history before though, haven't you? What about that story you told me

about keeping Sir Walter Raleigh from being beheaded in the tower? Or when you told Columbus to take another two

ships with the *Mayflower?* You weren't just making it all up, were you?' She tried to make herself look like a little

girl who had just heard a rumour there was no Father Christmas.

The Doctor looked genuinely uncomfortable, as he did on the infrequent occasions he found himself

apologising to the Brigadier. Salvation came in the form of Bernard, waving at them through the throng and

squeezing his way towards them. Ah there you are old chap; boomed a clearly relieved Doctor. 'Now where were we

last night? Dialectical synergy versus logical positivism. Now, as I said to Thomas Huxley...'

Even if she had b 100

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en able to understand a word they were talking about, Jo would have still felt excluded. The

Doctor clearly didn't want to talk to her - at least, not about her request, She waved as he looked back over his

shoulder, and went to find Joan and her Lambeth contingent.

Across Berkshire, they marched, old and young, individuals and families,

atheists and Quakers, businessmen and trade unionists. Although the Easter weather was still unpredictable, Jo

was easily managing without the comforts of home, and found the rhythm of movement rather soothing.As

they approached the centre of Slough, a voice nearby started to intone John Betjeman's ode to the town.

`There's always one,' cooed Joan, reminding Jo that this march had become an established tradition for its

participants in just a very few years. The protest songs she had heard, both during the day, and as the marchers

settled each night were clearly being returned to rather than being spontaneously composed. Before she could

ponder why the protests had not continued to her own time, Joan went on. 'I wonder if smart-arse Betjeman had

any idea how *unfriendly* bombs can be? Perhaps the ones he had in mind were a bit more selective.'Although Jo had

found some of the post-war suburbs and factories that had sprung up to be ugly in the extreme, she could see Joan's

point. Atomic bombs were an all-ornothing proposition.

Meanwhile, Bernard and the Doctor seemed quite content to walk side by side in silence. Jo reasoned this was

quite natural for the professional and amateur philosopher respectively, perhaps finding their polite

disagreement over the Doctor having, or having not, met all the great thinkers he claimed to have enjoyed discourse

with.The Doctor appeared preoccupied and disturbed. Rather than humming to himself or murdering an aria,

his lips were occasionally moving without any speech issuing as his eyes scanned back and forth, his hand occasionally

flying to his mouth or neck as if trying unsuccessfully to blot out some thought.

Sunday

By now, Jo had settled into the rhythm of the march and her previous existence almost seemed to belong to another

life. She had almost fallen into the trap of thinking that any group vaguely connected with peace would receive

sanctuary in an English church hall, like some kind of Franciscan youth hostel, but had been rescued from her

complacency by the sound of a minister at the gate of his churchyard outside Maidenhead loudly declaiming that the

bomb was the Lord's will, and would save us from the Godless Soviet Union. She had thought he was very silly, but shared

the majority of the marchers' view that he had just as much right to say his piece as they had to put their beliefs in the

open. She was annoyed a few moments later to find herself thinking that, by extension, the Doctor had every right to

defend his belief that the creation of the A-bomb shouldn't be

tampered with. Her annoyance then deepened as she

realised that she still had no idea why he held that belief.

That evening, the marchers made their final stop, at Hounslow on the

western outskirts of London. Their numbers had swollen, and Jo had realised another practical reason for

reversing the direction of the original 1958 march - as they neared London, the population became denser, and there

were more people joining for the final day or so - 'day trippers: Joan had called them, causing Jo to wonder briefly

whether the Beatles had yet formed - making their eventual arrival in Trafalgar Square all the more spectacular.

In Hounslow, an animated man in a duffel coat just like Jo's had addressed a few hundred of the marchers

and local onlookers in a park from the back of one of the lorries. Joan had remarked that the man, Michael Foot

apparently, had lost his seat in parliament, but that some of the CND members admired him all the more for it. He

had spoken about the superpowers' moral responsibility to exercise the tools now at their disposal.Towards the end of

his address, Jo noticed the Doctor at her side.

`Doctor! How long have you been there?'

Òh, a few minutes, Jo. Long enough to recognise someone who knows how staying out of power can confer genuine

authority - a man after my own hearts, you might say!'

`Did you hear what he was saying about - what was it - the moral responsibility not to exercise our powers?'

`Yes, Jò He looked solemnly at her. 'Is there something you want to ask me?' By now the crowd was dispersing and

they found a quiet bench and sat down together.

`What you were saying earlier, about not going back to stop the bomb from being invented. It's not that you can't, is

it, but that you won't.There's no law or rule that says you mustn't change history whenever you feel like it, but you

just know when you mustn't. I'm right, aren't I, Doctor?'

'Top of the class, Jò

'Are you going to tell me why?'

The Doctor looked around distracted for a few moments, before gathering himself and turning back to her as if

he were about to begin a lecture.

`Do you think guns are a good thing, Jo?'

`No, of course not'

`But the Brigadier tells me you've completed all your firearms training. Why do that, other than to keep your

commanding officer happy, of course?'

`Well, I suppose I need to be able to defend myself.You must admit that we don't all have your ingenuity when it

comes to Autons or enemy agents`

`So you believe in defence?'

Ùp to a point, I suppose: answered Jo, wondering where all this was leading.

`Look around you. What do you think this England of yours would look like today if Churchill hadn't had his

ack-ack guns to keep out the Luftwaffe. Or for that matter, his tanks to push back the German line'

`Well - very different, I supposè Jo could feel herself being

worked on, and she didn't want the warmth she had

experienced with Joan and the other marchers to evaporate. 'But it would look just the same as it does now if

Hitler hadn't had his tanks and his planes as well. That's the point - if the weapons hadn't been invented, no

one could use them, could they?'

The Doctor stared at her. 'What do you eat your dinner with, Jo?' A knife and...' He cut her off.

À knife.A weapon of murder. Where would Richard Hijack the Ripper or Sweeney Todd have been without the

knife? To them, it was the most deadly weapon they could imagine, just like the atomic bomb is to these good people.

And they used them. And now, so do you'

`Yes, but not to kill anyone!'

`That's because you're more advanced, intellectually, philosophically and morally. You don't want to kill anyone.

And if you did, you'd use the hand gun the munitions sergeant issued you.The point is that it's not the knife that's

evil, or immoral. It's the use that it's put to. Imagine how inconvenient Sunday lunch would be without a

carving knife, or a wedding day without a cake slice? You've learned to put what was once the most powerful

weapon in the world to perfectly peaceful use!'

Ì know I am occasionally a little slow on the uptake, Doctor,' smiled Jo, realising she was being led, without her will,

to a conclusion that would seem blinding obvious, yet again, in hindsight. 'But when is anyone ever going to use a

nuclear weapon in a kitchen?'

`Since you ask, Jo, the Bobodix of Lonsee-23 use thermonuclear devices to caramelise their snadge puddings. I'll

admit, the Bobodix are each the size of Antarctica, but just you wait a few years, and you'll be eating plenty of

irradiated food on this planet yourselves. You need to take a few steps back, and see the bigger picture. I suppose I have

the advantage of a wider perspective. You may find this hard to believe, but I've seen occasions when this little

planet of yours has been threatened by more than a few V2s or doodlebugs. You'll need more than barrage

balloons to cope with a wandering asteroid or Cyber-invasion fleet`

Àre you saying that we *need* atomic bombs? That they're actually a *good* thing?'

`Haven't you been listening, Jo? No weapon or invention is intrinsically good or bad in itself. It's the use you put it to

that matters. In this century, humanity has advanced technologically at a faster rate than ever before. That's why

you've drawn so much attention to yourselves - it's why I'm here! But you have to evolve morally at the same

pace as you do

technologically or you'll simply wipe yourselves out. That's why the humanists here, people this weekend, are

just as important to the development of your race as the scientists like Bohrs and Oppenheimer. And, incidentally,

Jo, why I'm proud of you for wanting to come here.

Ì couldn't uninvent the atomic bomb, just as I couldn't prevent the discovery of fire or the invention of the

wheel.You're such an inquisitive species that you'd only find them a few centuries or decades after I'd convinced

some poor caveman or physicist that he was barking up the wrong tree.The important thing is that the wheel comes

with a Highway Code, or that fire comes with a Fire Brigade.

responsibly that takes common sense. These people are just the latest Fire Brigade: they don't want to stop there

being such a thing as fire - just to make sure it doesn't get out of control.They're what engineers would call a negative

feedback circuit.'

Jo had found a kind of peace. The Doctor exhaled and quietly smiled at her.

Monday

The following morning, having swelled in number to a hundred thousand, the matchers slowly moved, in silence,

as they had when leaving Aldermaston, into Trafalgar Square and the surrounding streets. The weather had set

in now, with a steady drizzle pouring down on the sea of people and banners, stretching in all directions, in sharp

contrast to the crocodile that had made its way across Berkshire for the previous few days.The Doctor sheltered Jo

from the rain with his cape as best be could, while they and Bernard stayed near Joan and her Lambeth contingent,

who seemed, like everyone in the square, to be taking strength from the sheer numbers present.

Jo had known already that there were around a hundred thousand people in the square, but with what Joan

had told her, *she* now knew that this endless sea of humanity was fewer than the number of people wiped out in an

instant by the two atomic bombs, just fifteen years earlier in Japan. For all that she had accepted the Doctor's

comforting lesson, those lives felt like an impossibly high price to pay for progress.

She wandered if the Doctor shared her thoughts, and from under his cape looked up at him

He was just looking into the middle distance, not returning her glance, not looking around the crowd. He looked as

though he would rather be anywhere else but here.

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Earlier

It is seventeen years before, half a world away, at Los Alamos in New Mexico, where a Ranch School has been

converted into a Research Centre housing what will later be known as the Manhattan Project. Although Robert

Oppenheimer is the man singly best associated with the project, and its two most famous offspring, Little Boy, and

Fat Man, the atomic bombs that will in two years' time wreak the greatest artificial violence upon the Earth since its

formation, there is also a team of three dozen physicists and engineers, each with his own work area, all essential to the

project.

It is between three and four am, Pacific Time, on a Saturday evening in March. The door to the office of Professor

Neils Bohr is closed, but the electric lighting inside shows a poorly disguised space-time travel machine in the

corner. Its owner, aware he will not be disturbed, is hunched over Bohr's handwritten notes at the desk. He

occasionally sighs or tuts exasperatedly making corrections in longhand that will look as though the physicist's

colleagues have made them.

It is soon time he was on his way, but before he goes, he must ensure the Manhattan Project runs no risk of

failure.

Graham Dilley Saves The World

lain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

ENGLAND CLINCH

INCREDIBLE VICTORY!

***by William Jenkins-Wells (Cricket reporter;* National Clarion)**

Australians crumble to Willis onslaught

SOMETIMES A SPORTING event moves beyond the

adrift and one second innings wicket already lost.

realms of sport and becomes something else, something

Journalists were preparing eulogies for the national

special - a moment in history no one will ever forget.

team.

Everyone remembers Muhammad All knocking out

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By the close of play on the fourth day, the corpse had

George Foreman in the Rumble In The Jungle. Everyone

shown signs that it wasn't ready to lie down and die

remembers Bobby Moore raising the Jules Rimet trophy

just yet.That defiant, belligerent 145 not out by Ian

at Wembley in 1966. In cricket it's Boycott's hundredth

Botham had given England a slender lead. By the end of

hundred or Jim Laker's 19-wicket haul at Old Trafford the fifth day, despite the odds of 500-1 against given by

in 1956 or, for the lucky few, the legendary Don Bradman

bookmakers less than twenty-four hours previously,

hitting 334 at Headingley in 1930.

the dead body of English

Fifty-one years later Headingley gave us another of

cricket had risen from its grave, a Phoenix rising in this

those moments.

Ashes series, and England had won the match in the

At the close of play on the third day of the third test

greatest comeback the sport had ever seen.

of the 1981 Ashes series, English cricket was being

A moment for Englishmen to savour. A moment in

buried. Already one test down and with the captain

history.

sacked, England were following on, still two hundred

The involvement of the Doctor and his companions is never mentioned in match reports, but they were most

certainly involved in this most important of games...

As usual, the Doctor and his friends were in trouble and not for the first time, they were on the run.

'So much for the best party of the century!' Peri gasped. 'Let's go to Edinburgh,' she mimicked the Doctor's

breathless accent. 'You'll enjoy their millennium celebrations.'

They ducked as more gunfire from behind them kicked stone chips from the old walls on either side of their

heads. 'Save your breath,' the Doctor answered. 'We're almost there.' He turned to his younger companion.

'Erimem, how are you holding up?'

Erimem kicked her boots against a wall to shake snow from their soles. Boots were still a novelty for the young

Egyptian, a novelty she was looking forward to swapping for a more comfortable pair of flat sandals. Ì will be

much happier when we are safely in the TARDIS`

`Same herè Peri risked a glance behind them. Five men, each carrying a heavy gun, were hurrying towards

them along Princes Street. 'The snow's slowing them upÀs if on cue, one of the men lost his footing in the sickly,

yellow snow, skidded and toppled into his nearest colleague. They hit the deck with a muffled thump and less

muffled swearing.

Àll right, run!' The Doctor pushed his companions in front of him and they darted for the TARDIS as fast as the

thick blanket of snow would allow.

`Hurry Doctor: Erimem urged, as the Doctor rummaged in his pocket for the key.

After what seemed an eternity, he fished the key from his pocket. 'I knew I had it somewhere.' He unlocked the

door, letting Erimem and Peri barge through. A bullet hit the TARDIS and ricocheted away, unable to break through

the ship's protective shell 'Hooligan!' the Doctor muttered indignantly 'You'll ruin the paintwork. It's...'

Two pair of hands emerged from the TARDIS and dragged him inside and *the* door slammed shut.

`Come to Edinburgh, you said!' Peri rounded on the Doctor as he manipulated the TARDIS controls,

dematerialising the ship. She took off her overcoat and shook it. Unhealthy-looking yellow snow spattered the console

and oozed down the panels leaving an oily trail behind it. 'You'll have fun, you said`

À party like you've never seen,' Erimem chipped in accusingly. That's what you promised us` She ruffled a hand

through her short, dark hair sending more snow onto the console. Nervously Erimem sniffed her hand. The

melting snow smelled sour and rancid. Something to do with the chemicals the Doctor had said were being used as

weapons.

Ìt'll be a great night, you said!' Peri picked up again. Èdinburgh has the best New Years anywhere in the

cosmos,you said.'

Ìt was certainly a memorable celebration,' Erimem said sourly, wiping her hands dry on her heavy coat. 'We

were captured, thrown into a dungeon, sentenced to death...'

And shot at: Peri interrupted. 'Don't forget being shot at'

...and shot at: Erimem continued. 'Many, many times.'

Peri was well into her stride by now 'Not to mention the crazy local bigwig goofball in the castle who wanted to

marry us and stick us in his harem'

`Both of us: Erimem added.

`Well, you said yourself he was insane,' the Doctor joked. Even before he had finished speaking, his expression

showed that he knew he had made a mistake Erimem's jaw had dropped and Peri was fit to explodèSorry,' he

apologised swiftly. Bad joke'

`You... ' Peri choked off a curse. And another thing -' she prodded her finger at the Doctor viciously - 'when we

were locked up all they gave us to eat was haggis! I mean... haggis!'

Àctually, I quite liked that,' Erimem chirped. 'It was very spicy. It reminded me of...'

Èrimem!' Peri glared at her friend. 'Not helping, okay?'

Òh. Sorry.'

Peri turned her attention back to the Doctor. 'If that was your idea of a party, then next time you have a birthday,

count us out'

The Doctor backed away, keeping at least two panels of the console between himself and Peri. He eyed the interior

door balefully, but then noticed that Erimem had moved around the other side of the console. He was caught in a

perfectly executed pincer movement, trapped between his two very annoyed companions.

The Doctor held his hands up in a placating gesture. 'Listen, he said in the calmest tone he could muster. 'I've

been to Edinburgh a number of times in the years just after the millennium and none of what we saw had happened'

Òf course it happened,' Erimem frowned. 'We were there. We saw it. Those chains in the dungeon were certainly

real'

Òh, they were real enough: the Doctor agreed. 'They just shouldn't have been, that's all. They had no right to

exist and no place in this time at all. While I was in the dungeon, I had the chance to have a long chat with another

prisoner. It seems that in his world, history has taken a turn that it shouldn't`

`Did that make any sense to you at all, Peri?' Erimem asked.

Peri shook her head 'Not a word'

The Doctor hands flitted across the control panels. 'I'm programming the TARDIS to scan every computer it can

findÀn image of the Earth appeared on screen. 'Erimem, press that blue button, would you?'

As Erimem hit the button, the picture on the screen blurred and the Earth split into a dozen shadows of the original

each spinning, slightly out of focus and each one slightly out of time with all the others`Definitely a divergence in time,' the

Doctor murmured. 'Let's see where and when it happened exactly.'

He programmed the controls for a moment, turning a dial here, making a delicate adjustment there and then the various

images of the Earth on the scanner eased back together into one solid image of the planet, which began to rotate

anticlockwise. The spinning increased in speed until the planet was a blur. A small panel on the console chirped and

information scrawled quickly across a monitorAsiot too far in the past,' the Doctor said, then added with surprise,'...and

there's TV coverage of it` .

On the scanner, Earth stopped spinning and the image grew suddenly larger, as if the TARDIS had swooped towards it.

The image closed in on the site of the divergence, cutting through clouds, moving across green countryside. 'Got it!' the

Doctor said triumphantly. 'Leeds, England, July 1981.' He hit a control and the view on screen changed to one of a tall

man dressed in white running at full tilt in a green field, his curly hair bouncing as he ran.

`Bob Willis?' the Doctor frowned.

`You know him?' Erimem peered at the screen, fascinated by the moving pictures, which were something else she was still

becoming used to. 'Is he a friend of yours?'

Acquaintances at least,' the Doctor agreed. 'But I can't imagine what he'd have to do with a divergence in time.' He

peered at the screen, confused, as Willis bowled a short ballÈspecially at this match.'

`You know what happens here?' Erimem asked.

The left-handed batsman moved inside the line of the ball and hooked the ball high into the air.

Òh, yes,' the Doctor said easily. I'm at the game. It's a famous catch. A famous cricket match. Third Test of the 1981

Ashes series. I seem to remember that I promised to take you there once, Peri. Anyway, the batsman gets caught in the

deep by Graham Dilley' The ball dropped towards the waiting fielderÀ very good catch, all things considered`

The ball smacked into the fielder's hands...

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`Considering he dr 111

opped it, Peri said wryly

`What?'

In slow-motion, the action replay was showing on screen. The ball fell towards a tall, fair-haired fielder's hands, but then it

hit the heels of the fielder's hands and rebounded out of his grasp, over the rope for six.

The Doctor stared at the screen, shock clear on his face.'He dropped it.'

`We can see that.'

`But Dilley didn't drop it,' the Doctor protested.

Erimem pointed at the screen as the replay was shown again. 'Yes, he did. Look.'

`But he couldn't have dropped that catch - I was at the game. I saw him take the catch` The Doctor hit a control and

a plummy English voice took up commentary as yet another

replay was shown on screen. The Doctor turned a dial

and raised the volume.

'Oh, how terribly sad, the commentator said. 'He did everything right except hold the catch and you have to say it

was rather a regulation catch, wouldn't you agree, Brian?'

Another commentator answered. His voice was deep and a little gruff but had a lightness that made him sound

like an elderly schoolboyÌt was a jolly hard chance though, Digger,' he told his colleague:The ball was in the air a

long time and he didn't have much space to move inside the ropes

And I think he was distracted as the ball came towards him,' Digger added

Sure enough, the replay showed the fielder's eyes momentarily flick away from the ball.

Ì wonder what distracted him?' Brian asked.

On cue, the camera panned round the crowd, most of them dressed for a cold, grey Yorkshire day. Sweaters, coats

and jeans were the order of the day until the camera rested on a brightly dressed figure: an attractive young

woman in her early twenties with short, spiky hair and a bright, multi-coloured dress that stopped well above her

knees.

`Well, now we know what distracted him, Brian said. 'A pretty girl in a rather splendid dress that's all splotches of

gold, white, red and green`The camera zoomed in on the young woman's face as the crowd barracked her for

distracting the fielder. 'Can't really blame a chap for being distracted by a pretty girl, can you? Perhaps the colour

of her dress caught the corner of his eye? Or was she being

shouted at to sit down? I'm not sure. I'm sure it was an

accident, though.'

`She's probably an Australian supporter,' Digger chuckled.

Ì think you're right, Digger,' Brian agreed. And I think I know her,' he added uncertainly.

`You're not the only one: the Doctor breathed.

`You know her, too?' Peri asked.

The Doctor nodded. Tegan`

`Who is Tegan?' Erimem askedÌs she an enemy of yours?'

`She could make my life miserable at times,' the Doctor said with feeling but then he smiled ruefully`But she was a

friend of mine 'A deep sadness flashed across his face just for a second:A very good friend.'And then the sadness was

gone, or at least a mask was pulled over it.

`So, let me get this straight,' Peri began. 'Your friend... Tegan?'

`Tegan: the Doctor confirmed.

`Right. When Tegan made this blond guy drop the ball, she changed history?'

`Not exactly; the Doctor corrected. 'She caused history to schism. She created a timeline that shouldn't exist. He

pressed a button and text began to scroll across a screen. 'Britain was a volatile place in the early 1980s, he said.

'Civil unrest, social upheaval, riots in the streets, a government that polarised the public.Things could have got

very nasty'

A wry expression flitted across Peri's face. 'Don't tell me - in this timeline, things did get nasty'

`They looked very nasty from that dungeon, Erimem added.

'Despite the haggis'

The Doctor nodded and continued reading the information that whizzed across his screen. 'After England lost

the match, a drunken brawl started in a London pub. Some supporters who'd been watching on television -

Erimem, Peri will explain television to you properly later -these supporter were disappointed and drunk'

`So they started fi 112

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hting?' Erimem asked.

Again a nod. The fight spilled onto the streets. The police, already on alert from earlier disturbances, moved in.

They, in turn, were attacked by rioters and it escalated from there. People were killed, buildings burned to the

ground and resentment festered. In the next few days, there were more riots and various organisations crept into

the picture, manipulating the trouble for their own purposes. Inside of a week, the Queen was injured in an

assassination attempt while she was overseeing preparations for Prince Charles's wedding. After that, the

security forces were given draconian powers. Demonstrations and protests were put down by force. More people

died - on both sides. Public and police. When the royal wedding eventually did go ahead in September, there was

another assassination attempt. This time it was successful. A bomb in Westminster Abbey killed half of the world's

heads of state and Britain was left in the hands of King Edward IX. Police began to carry guns, so did criminals.

Martial law was introduced, Habeas corpus was suspended.

Internment camps were introduced' Slowly, the Doctor

switched the screen off. Society disintegrated. Within ten years, there was no law and order. Internationally, the loss

of so many leaders led to wars, unrest and anarchy.'

Àll because that guy dropped a catch?' Peri asked incredulously `Because Tegan distracted him,' the Doctor

corrected.

Peri tried to read the data on the control panel's screens but the text was scrolling too fast for her to catch any of

it. 'How did she distract him?'

Ì don't know. But everything has repercussions, Peri. Even a game of cricket'

`But we can fix it, right?'

Òf course we can,' Erimem stated confidently. When the Doctor didn't immediately answer, her assurance slipped a

little. Can't we?'

The Doctor shifted uncomfortably. 'Well, it's rather difficult to explain...' he began.

And we're passing you across to the BBC news room now If anything happens while you're away, Digger - that's

William Jenkins-Wells, old Digger Wells himself - and I will report on it as soon as you get back'

The TARDIS materialised at the back of the commentary box a second after Brian had hit the button to turn his

microphone off. The scorer briefly looked up from her scorecards at the police box, then turned her attention back

to the action on the pitch.The commentators weren't put out in the slightest either, as if a police box suddenly

appearing from nowhere in their commentary box was the most natural thing in the worid

The Doctor's here, Brian noted, sipping his tea.

Digger frowned and helped himself to another digestive biscuit. 'I thought he was here already.'

`Don't worry about it,' Brian said nonchalantly. 'Never try to work out the Doctor's comings and goings. You'll

just give yourself a nasty headache'

The first to emerge from the TARDIS was an young woman who spoke with an American accent. `So you're saying

that you can't do anything to stop Tegan, even though she's your friend and even though it's your fault she's here in

the first placè

The Doctor followed. 'Well, yes, you could put it that way,' he blustered. `Hello, Brian, Digger,' he said over the

American's shoulder to the commentatorsÌ hope you don't mind us dropping in like this'

`Not at all,' Brian smiledÀlways a pleasure to see you, my dear fellow.'

`This is Peri, the Doctor said.

Ì still don't see why you can't just ask Tegan not to distract this player,' said another girl, who followed the Doctor

out of the TARDIS and closed the door.

And this is Erimem? The Doctor turned to his companions`Because I'm already here, he explained.

Ì know,' Erimem answered patiently. 'I can see yoù

The Doctor took a deep breath and tried again. 'Tegan is here with 'Furlough and me.A different me.A younger,

earlier me. The current me is here with you and Perì

A little crinkle appeared between Erimem's eyes as she tried to work out the Doctor's explanation`So you're

here and somewhere else at the same time?'

The Doctor clapped his hands together. 'Exactly,' he exclaimed enthusiastically 'Spot on`

"That's silly' Erimem said flatly 'Even you can't be in two places at once.' She glanced at Peri. 'Can he?'

Peri nodded. 'He can if there are two of him.

Ànd I can't risk meeting myself; the Doctor picked up the explanation. "This is a focal point for time.A nexus, if

you will.The last thing we need is Blinovitch on top of everything elsè Two blank faces stared back at him. 'Did

you understand any of that?'

'I recognised some of the words: Erimem said thoughtfully.

`But the sentences didn't make a whole lot of sense; Peri finished for her friend. Erimem bobbed her head in

agreement.

The Doctor sighed. 'It means that it would be dangerous for time if I were to meet myself; he explained.

Peri eyed the Doctor suspiciously.Ìf you can't do anything, that means...' `We have to: Erimem cut in.

The Doctor looked quickly between his companions. 'Well, yes,' he conceded.

`Great; Peri said sourly`So where will we find this Tegan?'

The Doctor looked at the clock on the pavilion.'We've got about half an hour till the end of the match, so if memory

serves...'

`Which it sometimes does,' Peri muttered.

The Doctor carried on, oblivious:'... then Turlough will still be eating, I'll be chatting with Tom Graveney and

Fred Trueman about Gower's weakness outside the off stump. I did try to tell him about that, you know. A little

more foot movement would have done wonders`

Ànd Tegan?' Erimem prodded before the Doctor could get into his stridèWhere is she?'

Timm? Oh,Tegan? She's in the ground somewhere' He allowed himself a slight smirk. She's Australian, so she's

not looking forward to the end of the match` He wafted a hand`Try third man`

`Wasn't that a movie?' Peri asked.

`Possibly; the Doctor answered sourly. `But it wasn't anything to do with this game. It's a fielding position like second

slip`

A second slip seems kind of careless after the first one; Peri smiled innocently

`Gulley: the Doctor continued.

`There's a trench in the field? Isn't that dangerous?'

`Silly Point; the Doctor grated.

`That's like the Ministry of Silly Walks but with pointing'

The Doctor sucked in a deep breath and bit off an annoyed reply 'Where is this fielding man we must stop

Tegan from distracting?' Erimem interrupted.

The Doctor scanned the field and pointed to a tall man with fair; curly hair standing alone on the edge of the

playing field`Well, at the moment he's at quite a fine deep backwards square leg.

Òh, come on.You made that up, Peri accused.'No game is going to have a position as dopey sounding as that.'

`Realty? Dopey sounding indeed?'The Doctor sniffed. `Do you

plan on standing there making fun of cricket all day?'

`Pretty much, she eventually said. But well probably take a break for lunch`

`Peri: the Doctor said sharply. "This is serious'

Ì know,' Peri smirked. 'But you've got to see the funny side, Doctor. A stupid game bringing the world to its knees.'

`Stupid game?' the Doctor bristled. 'If W.G. Grace could hear you now he'd turn in his grave' With as much

dignity as he could muster, the Doctor stuck his hands in his pockets and rocked back on his heelsÀnd silly as this

may seem to you, you do know what happens if things aren't put right' He peered at his friends expectantly. 'Well?

Shouldn't you two be looking for Tegan?'

Ì guess so,' Peri shrugged`Where will you be?'

The Doctor looked around the commentary box. 'Well, here, if Brian and Digger have no objections'

`You're more than welcome to stay,' Brian said affably.

Èxcellent: the Doctor said. 'I'll be able to keep an eye on everything from up here'

`Yoùll be able to watch the game, you mean,' Erimem said.

"That too, the Doctor grinned`Now off you pop. And be careful' is Tegan dangerous?' Erimem asked.

`No, but she does have a vicious tongue on occasion'

Peri was scanning the crowd. Any message? Like "please don't wreck the world"?'

Again, that brief s 115

adness clouded the Doctor's face. 'No. Best not. Best not all round, I think.

Any glib reply died on Peri's lips`So we start at this third man place?' Ì'm sure that's the last place I saw her

before the end of the match' Peri looked back blankly. 'Third man? And that's... where? Why don't

they have numbers on their backs like in baseball?'

`Numbers?' The Doctor was horrified. That just wouldn't be cricket -well, not yet` He indicated the commentary

box's door. 'Well, off you go' He watched his friends leave then turned to his hosts. am terribly sorry about this'

`Think nothing of it, Digger said`Take a seat'

'Cup of tea?' Brian offered.

"Thank you. Don't mind if I do.'

A light appeared on the control desk in front of Brian and he flipped a switch.'Welcome back to Headingley. Nothing

much has happened while you were away but it's still jolly tense and I think we're in for a historic afternoon?

The part of the field where Tegan would distract Graham Dilley was on the far side of the pitch from the

commentary box.To get there, Peri and Erimem were following a path round the outer perimeter of the ground.

The banks of seating ended and they emerged into an open area with spectators standing around or buying food

from stalls Erimem peered at the centre of the pitch. Bob Willis was charging in to bowl another delivery. This is

a very silly game,' she said 'I mean, that man runs all the way from the fence to throw the ball at the man with the

stick:

`Bat; Peri corrected.

`Bat, yes,' Erimem thanked her friend before continuing. 'He goes to all that trouble and the man with the bat

doesn't even try to hit it.What's the point?'

Sure enough, the batsman had raised his bat out of the way, letting the ball pass his stumps and sail into the

wicket keeper's waiting gloves.

Peri had to agree with the young Egyptian. 'It's like an even duller version of baseball. It's- hide!' She grabbed

Erimem and hauled her back behind the banks of seating.

Erimem tried to peer past Peri 'What is it?' she asked curiously, nudging and pushing Peri out her way

"Furlough. There, at the concession stand. He's got ginger hair and he's eating a really unhealthy looking burger`

Peri pointed to a sullen looking sandy-haired boy of around her own ageÀnd quit shoving.'

`He is another friend of the Doctor's?'

Peri couldn't be sure about that. She had talked with the Doctor about 'Furlough a few times and the Doctor's

comments on the boy had been ambiguous at best.'I thought so but from what the Doctor's said,Turlough was usually

his own best friend.'

Ì don't trust him; Erimem stated bluntly. 'His eyes are always moving. Always watching. He is like an animal looking

for weakness in others. A jackal.'

Peri shrugged and tried to push her own doubts about 'Furlough to the back of her mind. 'He did save my life, so I

guess I should cut him some slack.'

`Some slack what?'

`Never mind. It's just an expression. All the same, we should probably avoid him`

Ìf you think it best?

If I think it best?' Peri snorted. 'I don't have a clue what we're doing'

Erimem's face fell. Oh. Neither do Ì

`Kinda fun isn't it?' Peri laughed.

Erimem joined in the laughter`Yes, but we still have to stop Tegan` 'How hard can it be?' Peri rapped on a

wooden strut supporting the

seating:And why do I feel that I really should touch wood after saying that?' Ìs that another saying?'

Peri nodded. Yeah. Touching wood for good luck.'

Ì must try to learn more of your sayings; Erimem said.

Ònly if you teach me more of yours. Deal?'

`Deal,' Erimem agreed happily.

Ahead of them, the Doctor and a couple of other men had joined Turlough, who looked spectacularly bored by

both the conversation and the game. 'We'll have to go round the back,' Peri grumbled sourly. 'That's not our

Doctor`

'That will take much longer but I don't see any way past the Doctor. *That* Doctor: she corrected herself.

The path around the outer perimeter of the ground was thankfully empty, letting Peri and Erimem make good

time around it. An expectant roar followed by a disappointed Àaaah!` ran around the ground.

Another close call for an Australian batsman.

`We must be almost out of time; said Peri.

A metal gate swung open directly ahead of them both, and a

stout figure in dark blue stepped out ahead of them

from the gap between two stands.

`Get out of the way!' Peri managed to get half of the exclamation out before she and Erimem connected with the

policeman, knocking him back against the gate. He scrabbled desperately for a grip on the iron bars to stay on his

feet.

`What the... 'The policeman pulled himself to his feet and straightened his uniform.

'Sorry' Peri apologised and started to move on.

`Right, miss Misses,' he corrected himself` Stop right there.

`We're in a hurry' Erimem protested.

`Well, I can see that,' the constable answered, brushing dust from his trouser leg. 'Such a hurry you almost

knocked me over` He produced his notepad and pencil`Let's have some details`

`Who are you to ask questions of us?' Erimem demanded imperiously 'Peri, who is this?'

'A policeman; Peri explained. 'A guard. One that could lock us up if we're rude to him; she added pointedly.

'Oh`

'Eh?'The policeman frowned. A what?' He sized up the young women. Peri could almost see the lightbulb appear

over his head.'You're not local, either of you, are you?'

`Not so's you'd notice,' replied PerìBright of you to pick up on it'

`Less of that sarcasm,' the policeman said sternly 'I get more than enough of that sort of thing at home from my

kids. Safety pins through their nose, knees chained together, dreadful music and a mouthful of cheek. Well,

hereabouts, we have ways of doing things. And one of those ways isn't knocking over officers of the law going about

their duty`

`But you got in our way,' Erimem protested.

Ònly because you were running and not paying attention. I shall definitely have to take a note of this' He

sounded quite cheerful about the prospect.

`But we have to stop her,' Erimem said, as if that was more than enough explanation for the policeman.

`Stop who?'

A friend of ours,' Peri answered. 'Well, a friend of a friend really. She's going to do something stupid`

`Man trouble, is it?' the policeman asked, with a pinch too much glee. Ì suppose a guy is involved,' Peri

conceded.

`Good, the policeman smiled cheerfully. "That'll keep it interesting for the lads down the station. Right, names.

Both of you.'

Peri sighed. Perpugilliam Brown from Baltimore, Maryland`

Erimem followed suit. And I am Erimemushinteperem of Thebes in the twin Kingdoms of Egypt'

The policeman sucked his teeth thoughtfully for a moment. Perpy...' `Perpugilliam: Peri repeated. Perpugilliam

Brown'

And Erimemushinteperem: Erimem added helpfully

`Right."The PC shoved the notebook back into his pocket.'On your bikes, the pair of you. I'm off duty in fifteen

minutes and I'm not doing overtime just to write your names. Sling your hooks. I'm going for a cup of tea.'

`Thanks' Peri could have hugged the cop - except that he'd probably have arrested her. Well, that and the fact

that he was an overweight, pompous misery. 'Come on, Erimem`

And don't run, the policeman called after them Perpyteshimem indeed, he sniffed.

In the commentary 118

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box, the Doctor sat behind Brian, sipping a second cup of tea. His eyes darted between the game

and the boundary.The game was still running along the expected lines but so far, there was no sign of Peri and

Erimem. They should have made it to the far side of the ground with plenty of time.

He wondered briefly if they had interceptedTegan before she had made it to the boundary but then he saw the

familiar figure in the bright dress at the edge of the pitch. After travelling together for so long, Tegan's departure

had been quick, abrupt. So much had been left unsaid. They

should have been able to say their goodbyes properly, but this wasn't the time or place for that to happen. It would

only confuse Tegan and perhaps disrupt the timeline even more.

But perhaps some time in both of their futures...

Perhaps.

The Doctor turned his attention back to the cricket and concentrated on the game.

With Peri half a step behind her, Erimem charged up the steps into the stand at full pelt. 'How long do we have?'

Peri checked the clock, and then looked at the action on the pitch.They were almost out of time. `Not long I

guess.That pitcher - Willis - is starting to run in.'

`There she is!' Erimem pointed a long, slim finger at a brightly dressed figure walking slowly along the boundary

`Can't miss her in that dress,' Peri commented. 'She must be freezing.'

`Maybe that's why she looks so unhappy' Erimem suggested.

Peri snorted.'She's at a cricket game.What else would she be? Come on.'

They charged down the steps and started to cut across the rows of seats. Bob Willis was already well into his

run, halfway to the delivery point at the crease.

`Hey, sit down; a spectator snarled as first Erimem and then Peri pushed their way by. Other members of the crowd

joined in the complaints.

`Sorry' Peri called back over her shoulder. 'Love to stop and chat but we've got to save the worid.You know how

it is.'

Erimem was less than five yards behind Tegan when Willis bowled. She slapped a hand down on Tegan's shoulder.

The ball flew by the batsman and thudded into the wicket-keeper's gloves.

`Hey!`Tegan turned, quickly, ready to defend herself 'What's your game?' she demanded loudly.

Erimem stared back at her blankly. For all their efforts at getting to Tegan, they hadn't actually worked out

what to do when they did catch up with her.

`Well?' Tegan repeated.

Erimem faltered. Ì... I...'

Peri arrived a few moments behind her friend. 'It's... er... '

`Yes?'Tegan snapped, expectantly.

`Nice shoes?' Peri gasped, desperately hoping that hadn't sounded quite as lame as she thought it did.

Tegan stared at them. 'She almost gave me a heart attack because of shoes?'

`We're really interested in fashion?' Peri offered hopefully 'And those don't look like anything we've seen before.'

`Sit down: a spectator called`You're in the way'

Tegan ignored him. 'I suppose you won't have seen shoes like these. They're not local. Neither are you by the

sound of it.American?'

`Peri is,' Erimem confirmed. 'I am Egyptian'

Tegan shrugged, 'I didn't know cricket was popular in Egypt! Ìt's not,' Erimem said sourly.

'Hoi,' the spectator yelled again. Sit down. You're blocking the view: Tegan glared daggers at the spectator then

turned back to Peri and Erimem. 'I'm Tegan, by the way'

Peri nodded and had to bite off saying Ì know'. Instead, she completed the introductions. I'm Peri and this is

Erimem:

`Where did you find your shoes?' Erimem asked.

Èrimem's used to wearing something light on her feet,' Peri explained. `We travel a lot, so she's getting used to

wearing something more practical.'

`Something heavier,' Erimem corrected. 'I will have legs as thick as a hippopotamus because of the boots you told

me to wear.'

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Tegan eyed her own footwear 'These might be comfortable for a day like today but there are times I'd have

killed for a good pair of boots:

`Hoi! Will you three pack it in and sit down?' The spectator who had complained earlier had climbed over a couple

of ranks of seats and was leaning across the back of the front row. The mixture of exercise and anger had given

him a ruddy complexion all the way up to the top of his balding head, where it disappeared under an

unfortunate-looking combover. 'Some of us are here to enjoy the cricket:

Ànd some of us learned some manners,'Tegan snapped back.'You might have heard of manners. They're quite

popular in some parts of the world. Not your part obviously'

`Don't you talk to my husband like thatÀ blonde, pregnant woman had joined the complaining, ruddy-faced man.

'He's very well educated:

`Pity he didn't learn that it's rude to interrupt other people's conversations,' Peri replied snippily.

`You're the rude ones, talking when the game's being played,' the wife bristled.

`Don't call my friend rude,' Erimem responded angrily. `You're a rude old woman'

Òld?' the woman shrieked. 'Old? I'm scarcely middle-aged'

`For a redwood tree,' Peri sneered.

Àll right,' Tegan tried to calm things down. "this is getting silly and out of hand:

`Well you started it,' the balding man blustered.

`We did not,' said Tegan. 'We were having a quiet chat and you started getting all mouthy'

`Me? Mouthy?'

Àll right, all right'A steward, sporting a natty blazer and crisply pressed trousers was bustling his way along the

side of the pitch towards the commotion.'What's going on here?' Five voices started answering at once.

The crowd in the surrounding area couldn't help but take an interest in the extra entertainment provided by the

argument. Peri noticed that even Graham Dilley was glancing across. In the middle of the pitch, Willis bowled a

short delivery.

The sound of leather on willow caught Erimem's attention. 'He's hit it'

As Erimem and Peri had seen on the TARDIS screen earlier, the batsman had gone after a short-pitched delivery and

skied it high in the air, heading in their direction. And he's looking at us,' Peri moaned, staring at the bemused-

looking fielder`We swapped one distraction for another`

`He's going to drop it, Erimem wailed.

`Watch the ball, you muppet,'Tegan yelled at the fielder.

Dilley reacted, turning his eyes skywards and a few seconds later,

the ball dropped safely into his hands. He took

a few half steps back toward the rope, but stayed safely inside the boundary. Rodney Marsh was out and England were

back on track to win the match.

Òh, rabbits:Tegan grumbled. Why can't I keep my mouth shut? I could have won us the gamè

`Perhaps your men will still win the day,' Erimem offered hopefully.

Tegan shook her head sadly. `Nopè She looked at the England players celebrating. 'England are going to win this

game and the series, too. Still, there's nothing I can do about it. Flaming Botham. I don't know why I let the Doctor

talk me into coming here' She sighed:I need a drink`

Peri let loose a huge sigh`Sounds good to me:

Ànd me, Erimem agreed with feeling. 'Better than watching this silly game anyway.'

Tegan's expression brightened considerably:Right. Sounds like a plan to me. So what brings you two to a cricket

match?'

A friend; Peri grumbled 'He's enjoying the game somewhere'

`Sounds familiar:Tegan said wryly `So, how about we find a pub for that drink?'

The TARDIS door opened after the fourth hefty thump letting Peri and Erimem lurch in. The Doctor stood in the

console room, waiting. Erimem and Peri looked at the Doctor, then at each other and then at the Doctor again.And

then they started to giggle.

Òh-oh, we're in tr121122ouble: Peri sniggered.

Erimem tottered a little 'Not from the Doctor.' She grinned a

huge, cheesy and very tipsy grin. 'He wouldn't be

cross with us. He's a lovely man?

`You've been drinking; he said accusingly.

With a little difficulty, Peri focused her gaze on the Doctor. Ì am perfectly sober: She slurred a little.

Ànd so am I; Erimem agreed.

The Doctor folded his arms. 'Are you indeed?' Disapproval was thick in his voice.

Erimem pulled herself up to her full height, which was not particularly impressive. She still stood at least a head

shorter than the Doctor. 'I am Pharaoh Erimemushinteperem; she said imperiously. Daughter to Horus, living god,

light of Ra, beloved of...' she stopped, screwing her face up in concentration. 'Peri, I can't remember who I'm beloved

of. Is it Ra or Horus?'

Peri shrugged and threw her arm around her friend's shoulders:Not a clue. Sorry. Never met either of them. But

we love ya anyway, don't we, Doctor?'

"That's all right then; Erimem cut across any answer the Doctor was preparing. 'I don't think I wanted to be

beloved of either of them. They must be really, really old and wrinkly and they probably don't have any teeth left!

She blinkedÀnyway, what was I saying?'

`That you're Pharaoh and we're sober; Peri replied.

`Yes!' Erimem raised her hand again in a regal salute. I am Pharaoh and I decree that we are sober. I am a living

god. My word is law'

`So there; Peri added.

`Sober as judges: The Doctor sniffed the air. He'd be lucky if he didn't get a hangover from their breath.

Plastered, the pair of themÌ sent you to find Tegan, not to get pie-eyed:

`We did find Tegan; Erimem protested. And we stopped her from ruining your silly cricky game:

`Cricket; the Doctor corrected And how did you stop her?' A memory came back to him. A memory of Tegan the

morning after the Headingley game. She had slept late, been shorter with 'furlough than usual, had drunk pints of

water and generally been outstandingly grumpy. 'You got her drunk.

`Yep,' Peri confirmed happily. `Smashed. We didn't get a New Years party, so we improvised. Man, Tegan can hoover

vodka:

`But we kept up with her; Erimem protested proudly. 'And we both drank more apple juice than her:

`True; Peri agreed. "That is very, very true. She couldn't hold her cider: `No, she spilled hers on that big, bald man.'

The Doctor watched, bemused, as his friends laughed uproariously. The story obviously lost something in the

telling:So, what did you talk about with Tegan?'

A lot of nothing, really' Peri said blearily "The usual stuff. Girl talk. Clothes, shopping, fashion, guys, boobs'

'Although some of us don't have much to talk about,' Erimem complained, thumping her chest unhappily

'Careful,' warned PerìYou'll flatten what you do have.'

'Well, yes,' the Doctor cut in quickly,'if we can get back to business. Give him a bug-eyed monster or some evil despot

to deal with and he was fine, but when it came to talk of anything even remotely personal, he was floundering.

'Setting aside the laws you've broken with Erimem's underage drinking, well done: he congratulated them.

A piece of cake,' Peri wafted a hand dismissively.'ff you want a job done properly, get girls to do it:

'Cake, Erimem exclaimed. 'I want cake!'

'We need munchies!' Peri hooked her arm through Erimem's and they lurched off through the interior door`Let's

go raid the fridge'

The last thing the Doctor heard before the door closed was a chant of 'Munchies! Munchies! Munchies!'

An hour later, the Doctor found his companions, fast asleep in reclining chairs in one of the TARDIS's gardens. An

empty bottle of wine lay on the grass between them alongside plates of half-eaten sandwiches and a tapedeck. For a

moment, the Doctor contemplated waking them. He decided against it.The garden was more than warm enough for

them and the reclining chairs were almost as comfortable as beds. Best to let them sleep it off. After saving the world

they deserved a little celebration. He'd tell them how well they'd done in the morning.And then have words with them

about the drinking, naturally.

He picked up a dis123

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carded tape-box from the grass. The hand-written label *read,'Elvis Presley 1979: Born To Run,*

Jumping Jack Flash, Let It Be, The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down, The Lumberjack Song... 'The list stretched on

with another half dozen titles.Ì must remember to return this to Graceland,' he said. 'Otherwise musical history is

changed forever and that would never do:

After instructing the TARDIS to dim the lights, he left the garden.A visit to Headingley always put him in the mood

for a game. He collected his bat from the wall where he'd set it earlier. He spun it loosely in his hands a few times,

re-acquainting himself with its weight and balance. If he was lucky he'd have time for a good, long session in the

TARDIS's nets before his friends woke up.

'Cricket?' he mused, practicing a perfect forward defensive strokèMost important game in the world:

Bide-a-Wee

Anthony Keetch

Òuch!'

The Doctor grimaced at the sharp pain and glanced down. A small orange crab was indignantly nipping at his

big toe. He shooed it off with his walking stick, and it scuttled off seaward.

The Doctor smiled and took a large lick of his ice cream. It really was most delicious, he must try to programme

the food machine to recreate it. Susan would enjoy it too, she had inherited his sweet tooth. He felt a momentary pang.

This was the first time they had been apart since, well, their journeys had begun. But on their first day here she had

met four children and a dog, and they had invited her to go camping on a small island which one of them owned.An

unlikely story, but they seemed nice children, unlikely to drag her into mischief.

The Doctor inhaled a large gulp of the salty sea air and tutted with delight! He felt an unaccustomed surge of

gratitude for the TARDIS for bringing him to England during a glorious summer. Most relaxing after recent events.

He hadn't had a holiday since... The Doctor considered. Had he ever had a holiday? A period where, from arrival to

departure, the only problem had been what to have for dinner. Or what flavour ice cream to have this time?

The Doctor popped the remaining crumbs of his cone into his mouth and glanced upward. Not a cloud in the

sky, and there hadn't been since he had arrived.And that sky was the most delightful shade of blue. It really was

perfect here, quite perfect.

Well, almost.

But he would sort that little problem out later.

Maybe...

A bead of sweat plummeted off his distinguished nose.

That sun really was very hot, but then it was midday.And as the Doctor was neither mad, a dog, nor English - in

the words of the current song -he retrieved a handkerchief from his pocket, tied a knot in each corner, and placed

it firmly onto his head. That was better. Besides, there was a gentle breeze to take the edge of the heat.

Now - find a deckchair and have a snooze.

A bowl of something fluorescently green was placed in front of the Doctor. He sniffed it warily then unfurled his

napkin and flapped it across his lap.

Ah, splendid, Mrs H!' came a boom from the other side of the brown-panelled dining room. 'Pea soup, my

favourite!'

Ì know, Major.' Mrs Hutchings smiled at her longest-serving resident.'It's especially for you'

`You'll like this, Doctor; the Major barked from behind his

impressively cultivated moustache. 'Top notch grub,

always is' A chorus of assent rippled through the other guests, none of whom were likely to trouble sixty again

`Language, Major, please; sniffed Miss Lanchester, a big spinster with a bust on which you could display a tea

service.

The Major ignored the old trout. 'Don't I always say that, Mrs H?'

Mrs Hutchings smiled and glanced up as another resident appeared in the dining room. Mr Prentice, a man whose

features were forgo 126

tten as he was being looked at, blinked nervously behind his triple-glazed spectacles,

studiously avoiding the Doctor's hawkish perusal, and apologetically took his usual seat at the table for one in

the corner.

`Pea soup, Prentice!' the Major slurped, mid-mouthful 'Are we lucky chaps or what, what?'

Mr Prentice tucked into his soup, glasses fogging up in the process, and nodded enthusiastically.

The Doctor warily took a sip. Hmm, perfectly acceptable, although he chuckled to himself as he imagined the face

Susan would pull if she were presented with it. He was missing Susan.

Ì've had a productive day,' the Major told anyone who was listening. `Polished me medals, all seventeen of

them.What's everyone else been up to?'

Ì visited my poorly friend, Miss O'Neill,' said Miss Lanchester, ripping apart a bread roll with the same gentleness a

fox shows a chicken. 'We'll be burying her within the week, mark my words:

Ànd what about you, Doctor?'

Òh, I pottered, Major, I pottered. I had the most delicious ice cream.' Àt your age, Doctor?' Miss Lanchester

was outraged. 'Cold food is very bad for an elderly gullet'

The Doctor raised an eyebrow Ì have faced worse dangers, Madam' Miss Lanchester blanched. 'Miss; she

corrected him

Ànd you, Prentice, how have you spent your day?'

Mr Prentice wriggled in his seat.

'I never see you around town; the Doctor pointed out.

`No' Mr Prentice wiped his spectacles with his napkinÌ spend most of my time in my room.'The Doctor stared at

him, waiting patiently for more information. 'Writing my memoirs.'

Ì shall be fascinated to read them, sir. I would very much like to know what you have been up to'

Mr Prentice giggled nervously and hurriedly plunged back in his soup. The Doctor took a final slurp of the green

fluid and patted his mouth dry

'No doubt about it, Doctor,' the Major said after supper, as the two old men sat by the fireplace, Henry Hall on the wireless,

sharing the ex-soldier's flask of whisky, both fully aware of the disapproving glare of Miss Lanchester, who sat by

the window, knitting a matinee jacket for, the Doctor presumed, King Kong - the star of the film he and the Major had

thoroughly enjoyed at the Keelmouth Odeon the previous night.

'Bide-a-Wee is the best garret a chap can have. Been here every summer for twelve years, and touch wood -' the Major

tapped his head - 'Ill be back in 1934:

The Doctor winced and knocked back his Scotch.

'Care for another, old boy?'

The Doctor lay in his lumpy bed that night, his window open, the beam from the nearby lighthouse rhythmically

gliding across the floral wallpaper and momentarily illuminating the watercolour of a smug Jesus and a dazed Lazarus.

He was usually rapidly soothed to slumber by the hypnotic roar of the sea, but tonight sleep danced tantalisingly just

beyond his reach. It was all so idyllic here that he didn't really want to leave. He would have to, of course - not enough

stimulation for Susan - although England in the twentieth century seemed as good a sanctuary as any.

Yes, Keelmouth in 1933 was perfect. A shame he would have to put a stop to it.

But not quite yet. No need to hurry, after all, was there?

Sated with bacon and eggs and fried bread and black pudding, the Doctor contemplated the day ahead.A nice stroll in the

sunshine to walk off the lard, then a pot of tea in Doris's, a paddle before it got too hot, lunch at The Copper Kettle, a

snooze on the prom, a couple of games of bingo,

E. another snooze, the 128

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scones, back to Mrs H's for supper, then the evening was his oyster...

The Doctor sighed contentedly. He grabbed his straw hat and his lapels, and, not bothering to lock his bedroom door

behind him, headed for the reception.

Mrs Hutchings bit her lip, flustered. He had seemed such a nice young man when he had appeared and asked for a

room for himself and his wife and his little boy.The family room was free and aired, and it would be nice to have a

youngster about the place again. Make a nice change, blow some

cobwebs away. Not real cobwebs, of course. Not in her guesthouse. Spotless, always, she had her reputation to

consider.

But what would her residents think about this?

The Doctor smiled at the new family and raised his hat. Charming, quite charming. Young man in his early thirties,

he estimated, his pretty wife -Asian, Pakistani maybe? Or Indian? - and a delightful little boy, no more than five

years old, pre-school possibly

Jeff Atkins.' The man paused filling in the register and shook the Doctor's hand. My wife Ujwala, and our lad

Craig.'

Craig, saucer-eyed and mocha-skinned, looked up at the Doctor accusingly. Where's my Game Boy?' His

mouth curved down like a horseshoe.

His mother ruffled his hair. Shh, darling. We'll find your game when we unpack.' No trace of the east in her accent,

the Doctor noted. Well, Fast Sheen, possibly

`No, my Game Boy, silty Mummy'

`Where did you last have it, young man?' the Doctor asked him. Ìn the car.Then I didn't.You're very old,

aren't you?'

`Craig!'

Well, he is:

'Doesn't matter. Don't be rude.'

The Doctor interrupted the irate mother. 'Never chastise a child for telling the truth, Mrs Atkins. Besides; he

added ruefully, fully aware of the state of his left hip, 'he's right.' The Doctor clicked his fingers and produced a

stick of rock from Craig's left ear. He offered it to the lad who, wrinkle-nosed, pressed himself further into his

mother's legs.

Ì'm not allowed to takes sweets from funny men'

The Doctor looked crestfallen. 'Quite right: He handed it to Ujwala. Perhaps Mummy would like it:

Ujwala smiled and accepted the gift. `Thank you...?'

`Doctor.'

`Thank you, Doctor. Say thank you to the Doctor, Craig.'

`No, he'll stick a needle into me'

`He's very tired,' she mouthed, apologetically.

The Doctor smiled 'Welcome to Bide-a-Wee, Mr Atkins. You've chosen well, a fine establishment' The Doctor

doffed his straw hat again at Mrs Atkins. `Madam' marched for the front door, until stopped by his name.

`Doctor?' Mrs Hutchings clutched his sleeve and, finger pressed to her lips, dragged the Doctor though the porch

and into the front garden. She blinked, dazzled by the sunlight after the darkness of the reception.

Ì'm so sorry, Doctor,' she said.

The Doctor was puzzled`For what, my good woman?'

`Well... ' Mrs H jerked her head back at the reception. 'He seemed

perfectly respectable when he asked if I

had a vacancy' she pleaded

The Doctor noddedÀ delightful family.'

Mrs H's face visibly sagged with relief. 'You mean, you don't mind?' `Why on... earth should I mind?'

Mrs H nervously glanced back at the reception and lowered her voice. `With his wife being... you know?'

`Mrs Hutchings,' the Doctor said, drawing himself upright, nose held high`The Atkinses will, I am convinced,

make an agreeable addition to our little family'

Mrs H chewed her129

lip`Do you think so?'

`Madam, I am never wrong!And with that, the Doctor bowed slightly to her and set off on his morning stroll.

Mrs Hutchings watched the Doctor leave. Such a nice man, she thought. A widower, she presumed; she herself

was a widow. Handsome too, a lovely head of white hair.

It was ten years this December since Mr Hutchings died. The guesthouse kept her busy though. Too

busy. But it gave her company during the lonely days, in the season, at least. Haddock for supper tonight, she

decided suddenly. The Doctor's favourite.

She suddenly remembered her new visitors and her heart sank. What would her other guests say?

A present for you, my dear woman!'

Mrs Hutchings's face lit up as the Doctor presented here with a pink vase.

Òh, Doctor, how lovely'

A present! A present from the Doctor!

Ì won it at bingo,' the Doctor informed her proudly. A thought crossed his face. 'I suppose I should have put

some flowers in it, hmm'

`Never mind, I'll cut some roses from the garden tomorrow. Now go and sit yourself down in the dining room, I am

about to serve dinner.'And with that, Mrs H swanned off to the kitchen, her heart singing.

The Doctor, hair brushed, hands washed, toes de-sanded, entered the dining room. After the heat of the day, the

chilly atmosphere that greeted him threatened to induce hypothermia.

Miss Lanchester, her mouth pursed like a cat's unmentionable, glowered at no one and everyone in particular. Mr

Prentice stared down at his place setting, his forehead so furled his eyebrows had joined forces. Some of the other

guests whispered nervously amongst themselves.

The Major raised a hand in greeting. 'What ho, Doctor! Splendid day?'

But even the old soldier's usual crimson-cheeked ebullience seemed somewhat clenched.

`Yes, thank you, Major.'The Doctor took his seat, curious as to the origin of the change of mood.

Mr Prentice continued to avoid eye contact, and instead played with his salt and pepper shakers as though they

were some sort of battling lifeform. And your own day, Major? Satisfactory I trust.

`Yes, quite,' the Major replied.

Ì am very pleased to hear it, the Doctor informed him. `So why does everyone look as though a will has been read

from which they have been excluded?'

Miss Lanchester hoisted her bust into battle stations. 'We have new residents'

`Yes, I met them this morning,' the Doctor said. 'Charming family'

Miss Lanchester snorted.The Major winced. Mr Prentice looked pained. The rest of the guests metaphorically

ducked for cover.

At which point, the family in question appeared at the door. `Good evening: Jeff Atkins said. His wife

smiled. 'Hello'

The Doctor stood in greeting.

`Hello again, Doctor,' Jeff responded.

`Where should we sit?' Ujwala asked anyone who might be able to answer her. No one did. 'All the tables

seem taken:

Ì thought you might like to eat on your own: Mrs Hutchings hovered nervously around them. 'Maybe in your

room?'

Mr and Mrs Atkins looked at each other in confusion. 'Is there a problem?' Ujwala asked the landlady. Are

children not welcome?'

Miss Lanchester muttered something. The Doctor's sharp hearing caught what she said. He didn't like it.

`May I make a suggestion,' the Doctor offered. 'Why don't the Atkinses share my table? It can seat two more

adults and a little one quite comfortably'

Mrs H bit her lip. 'Erm...?'

Ì'm not little.'

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Mrs H glanced worriedly at her other residents. Ì suppose that'll be all right'

Miss Lanchester grabbed her reticule. 'Kindly send a boiled egg to my room, Mrs HutchingsÀnd she stampeded

out of the dining room, a bison with the hump.

The atmosphere eased a little.

Mr Atkins and the Doctor brought some chairs to the table.

Ì'll get you some cutlery,' said Mrs H. 'Then I'll serve the soup. It's runner bean tonight:

Craig pulled a face. 'I want pizza'

A confused expression flicked across his mother's face:There's no such food, Craig,' she said.

Craig was playing desultorily with his eggy soldiers while the grown-ups tucked into their chops and potatoes. If

the grown-ups wanted to go mad that was their problem, but why did he have to have such yuk food? And they

looked nothing like soldiers, it was just thin toast.And eggs came out of chicken's bums. Gleugh!

That really old man was asking all sorts of questions, but Mummy and Daddy kept answering them wrong.They

didn't have a Hillman Wizard, it was a Golf

`So what line of work are you in, Mr Atkins?' the Doctor inquired. `Software,' Jeff answered, then his eyes

glazed.

`Software?' asked the Major. 'Something to do with clothing?' Èrm... ' said Jeff, confused. 'Probably`

Ànd I'm a neuro-surgeon,' proffered his wife. 'Brain surgery, you

know,' she explained further.

Everyone laughed. Except for the Doctor. And Prentice.

Ì don't think that can be right: said the Major, wiping the tears from his eyes. No one in their right mind would

let a slip of gel near their bally skull, let alone a...' He stumbled under the disconcerting gaze of the Doctor.

'No offence,' he added, brightly.

`You're right: agreed Ujwala, joining in the laughter. 'What a silly thing for me to say. I... I... stay at home, I

suppose, and look after Craig:

Yeah right, thought Craig, You, the Bosnian nanny, and the Teletubbies. He wished that man with the funny

glasses would stop staring at him Craig stuck his finger in the sugar bowl and licked it.

`Don't do that, Craig:

Ì'm hungry!' Craig yelled. 'I want proper food. Like McDonalds!' Jeff slapped his son. 'Behave!'

Craig, his face purple from the impact, looked shocked. Ujwala, frowning, went to say something, but her

husband gave her a look and she meekly subsided.

Ì hate you!' Craig whispered. 'I want to go home. I hate it here:

Prentice, who had stopped eating, murmured some excuse and slipped out of the dining room. Only the Doctor

and Craig, through a welling of tears, noticed him leave.

The Doctor handed Craig a crisp white hanky:Jelly for pudding tonight,' be whispered.

`What flavour?' the boy asked, between sobs.

`Red:

His favourite! Craig wiped his face.

The Doctor was about to make his weary way to bed. He had this whole situation to ponder and he thought it

would be easier to do so horizontally

`Fancy a snifter, old boy?'The Major materialised in front of him.

Well, a quick drink wouldn't hurt and, who knows, it might help him relax.

The Doctor followed the Major into the lounge, empty apart from Miss Lanchester, still embarked on her

mammoth creation. She didn't acknowledge their entrance.

`So what do you think of our new residents, eh, Doctor?' the Major asked, drinks poured and pipe lit. 'Of

course,' he continued, before the Doctor could reply, 'I spent a lot of time in India meself. Had the pleasure of

more than one or two of the memsahibs, and never had any complaints, not that I'd ever marry one.The lad needs

firm taking in hand, so does the wife, but overall not a bad addition to our tribe.'

Miss Lanchester snorted and flung down her needles. 'I think it's disgusting:

`What is, Miss Lanchester?'

Èverything. It's bad enough that such marriages are allowed, but to bring a child like that into the world is

against the law of God. And, she said, rising from her seat like a tsunami about to submerge the town,Ì am ashamed

of Mrs Hutchings for allowing such people into the guesthouse. This used to be a respectable lodging, but no more,

oh, dear me, no. So I shall be leaving in the morning and moving in with my friend Miss O'Neill'

Òh, is she still alive?' asked the Doctor, surprised.

Miss Lanchester ignored him and stomped out of the lounge.

The Major gulped down his Scotch and poured himself another one.

`You know, Doctor, in my time I have encountered some terrible things; cannibal pygmies armed to the teeth

with, well, teeth; Boers with the pointiest sticks you ever did see; whole battalions of Jerry in the air and on

foot... but I'd face them all together, armed only with a toothpick, rather than cross that bloody woman!'

The Doctor took a slight detour en route to his bedroom. He knocked gently on Prentice's door. No response. So

he knocked slightly louder.

`Mr Prentice,' he said in a whisper which Prentice would have to be deaf to 'miss. 'I know you can hear me. It is

time you and I had a little chat Tomorrow, say, after breakfast, hmm? A little stroll along the prom. I might even

treat you to an ice cream:

Silence came the reply, but to the Doctor it spoke volumes. 'One further suggestion, Mr Prentice. I would advise you

to stay away from the boy`

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The Doctor raced down to breakfast as fast as his aged legs could carry him. He had overslept, unusual for him,

but this old body was letting him down more and more. Just be glad you don't have a prostate, he thought to

himself.

He scurried into the dining room.The Atkinses were there, buried in the *Daily Mirror* and the *Lady's*

Companion.

`Where's the boy?' the Doctor asked, breathlessly.

Jeff retrieved his nose from Pip, Squeak and Wilfred. 'He's off having an ice cream with that nice Mr Prentice'

A cold shiver danced up and down the Doctor's spine:Do you normally allow your child to go off with strangers,

sir?' he asked, coldly.

Ujwala looked at him curiously. 'Why what could possibly happen to him?'

It was very easy to find them. Keelmouth was hardly over-endowed with ice cream shops, and everyone knew

Morelli's was the best. So the Doctor had marched straight there and found Prentice and the boy...

Eating ice creams. Sitting at a table in the window in full view.

Hmm, not quite the hostage situation - or worse - he had expected.

Prentice looked up as the Doctor approached their table. Craig was nose down in his dessert and consequently

oblivious to the rest of the world.

Àre they Knickerbocker Glories?' asked the Doctor.

`Yes,' said Prentice. 'Would you like one?'

The Doctor had been rather conservative in his choice of ice creams so far, but this was delicious. The layer of

strawberry jam on the top really was the icing on the cake.

'I must commend you on your choice of dessert, Mr Prentice'

Prentice shrugged. 'Craig's choice' He looked at the Doctor. 'You expected to find the boy in some sort of

danger, didn't you?'

Ìs he?'

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'Am I?'

The Doctor flicked a shilling at Craig`Go to the paper shop next door, my boy, and buy yourself *a Tiger Tim*

Weekly'

ÒK' Craig slipped down from his chair. 'Will things get back to normal?' he asked the Doctor. 'I don't like it

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here. Mum and Dad hit me and the food's horrible. And there's no telly and I'm missing my Game Boy. And Tiger

Tim sounds really *gay'*

The Doctor patted Craig on the shoulder. 'Don't worry, young man, everything will be fine. Now off you go,

hmm, and buy that comic'

Craig scampered away

Àre you going to eat your glace cherry?' Prentice asked hopefully, fingers poised.

The Doctor smacked his hand away. `Yes, I am.'And he popped the item in question in his mouth.

Ì was going to give it to Craig, that's all. He loves them.'

The Doctor harrumphed. `This really can't go on, you know.' Prentice sighed. 'No, all ice creams must

come to an end.'

Ì meant...'

Ì know what you meant, Doctor.' Prentice took off his thick spectacles, breathed on them, and wiped them clean

with the edge of the tablecloth. Ì am surprised you didn't try to

stop me earlier.'

The Doctor said nothing.

Às soon as I realised what... who you were. Oh dear, I thought, here comes trouble.A nose is about to be stuck

in where it's not wanted'

`Do you seriously think I could allow you to meddle with time this way?'

Prentice pulled a face. 'It's only a small time distortion. Localised, that's all. No further afield than the area under

the jurisdiction of the Keelmouth and District Council'

`Size doesn't matter,' snapped the Doctor. 'It's the principle of the thing. I knew something was up the

moment we landed. So what year is it really?'

Ìn Keelmouth? 1933:

The Doctor gave him a look. And outside?'

1999:

And how long has this nonsense been going on?'

`Well, since 1933:

`You can't just distort history like this, sir, gasped the Doctor`Why have you done it anyway, hmm?'

Prentice scraped his spoon around his empty bowl, drumming up any remaining morsels. 'I have had a long and

tough life, Doctor. Adventures, shenanigans, derring do... I have fought evil, toppled dictators, rescued planets,

galaxies, universes even'

And_ ?'

Ànd...' Prentice shruggedÌ'm old and exhausted. Didn't have a single revolution left in me. So I decided to

retire. Here in Keelmouth. It was 1933 when I arrived. A glorious summer, blue skies and a warm sea and most

importantly, nothing ever happened here. Ever. Especially on Sundays. And I felt so happy and at home that I

didn't want it to end'

`So it never did: the Doctor said.

`Yes: said Prentice, happily. He poked the Doctor in the lapel. `Go on, admit it, you love it here too.'

Ìt has been a pleasant break,' admitted the Doctor.

`Well, then...'

`But it can't go on. 135

`Why?' pleaded Prentice. 'It's not doing any harm. The technology is something I borrowed from a heavily

advanced civilisation and is relatively foolproof:

`What about the Atkinses?'

Ah, yes: Prentice scratched his head, trying not to displace the strands of hair which he had carefully arranged

to hide his bald patch`Not sure how they got through.The barrier is suppose to be impenetrable:

`That explains the "relatively" part of the foolproof claim, eh?'

`But it still did the trick,' Prentice protested:It converted their 1990s car to a Hillman Wizard, and changed

their whole perception and consciousness:

`Playing with people's minds simply so that you can have an extended holiday,' the Doctor snorted. 'Monstrous!

That little boy has lost the parents he loves, replaced with strangers who beat him:

Prentice's lower lip trembled. You're exaggerating, Doctor.'

`You must allow them to leave and return to their own time' Ìmpossible:

`You cannot expect that boy to grow up in an era alien to his own: `He'll get used to it. Anyway,' Prentice

continued, 'life was better in the olden days, that's what humans always say.'

The Doctor's patience, sparse at the best of times, was rapidly eroding. `Humans talk nonsense, haven't you

noticed, Mr Prentice, hmm?'

`Barry, please'

`For all its postcard charm, this era is still barbaric in so many ways:

`Barbaric?' Prentice's eyebrows shot up so far he almost had a hairline again. 'Compared to... 1914 to 1918,

say? Or how about between 1347 and 1352... ?'

`Communications are rudimentary. For a start, they have barely evolved beyond waving flags at each other: The

Doctor struggled for further evidenceÀnd they still have witchcraft laws, for goodness sake! And you witnessed the

unpleasantry in the dining room last night. The storm clouds of fascism were fast appearing in 1933. Do you

really want young Craig to grow up as a second-class citizen simply because of the colour of his skin? His mother's

undoubted skills to go unused?'

`Shh, Doctor! *Ne pas d'enfant.'*

Craig strolled back into Morelli's, his nose glued to the inside of *Tiger Tim Weekly*.

`Would you like something to drink, Craig?' Prentice asked the boy. `Sunny Delight, please, Uncle Barry.'

Òh: said PrenticeÌ don't think that's been invented yet:

`Tango then'

Erm

Craig sighed. 'Whatever.'

The Doctor leaned over and whispered in Prentice's ear 'We'll continue this conversation after dinner'

Prentice shrugged. 'Whatever,' he echoed.

`Doctor! Doctor!'

With a grunt, the Doctor wrenched himself from a perfectly acceptable dream. So much for his early night. Who

was making that infernal racket? Susan?

He persuaded his still-sleeping bones out of the bed, grabbed his dressing gown, tucked his feet into his

slippers, and opened the door. Prentice stood in the hallway. 'Doctor, come quickly! Craig's dying!'

Craig's small frame was wracked by a violent coughing fit, his face contorted and blue. As each paroxysm

subsided, he made a whooping noise as he sucked in fresh oxygen.

The Atkins asked me to baby-sit while they went to the pictures. I thought he was quiet, then he suddenly

started... doing this'

The Doctor took the boy's pulse, then felt his forehead. He glanced up at Prentice, his expression grave.

Ìt's whooping cough; the Doctor informed Prentice.

`Really?' Blood fled from Prentice's face. 'Is that bad?'

`Look at the child!' shouted the Doctor, incredulous. `What do you think?' `But you can cure him?'

`There is no cure:

Prentice looked aghast.

`Yet; the Doctor continued.

`What do you mean?'

Ì believe a cure was discovered late in the twentieth century' But surely,' pleaded Prentice, 'you must

know what the cure is? `My dear fellow, I am not a doctor of medicine. And anyway, the human

physiognomy is alien to me'

Neither man spoke for a while, the silence in the room broken only by the wheezing from Craig's throat.

'You know what you have to do,' the Doctor said quietly.

Prentice shook his head.

You would allow a child to die simply to keep your secret?'

Prentice stared at the Doctor, turmoil in his brain. 'But even if I did dismantle the field, what would happen to

everyone else? They have lived in the 1930s for decades. The 1990s would be such a culture shock for them? He

consideredÌt wouldn't do me much good either'

Ì am sure, with your temporal engineering skills, we can rig up some way of returning everyone back to

where they belong; to take up their lives where they left off?

Prentice sighed. 'And me, Doctor, where do I belong?'

The Doctor chuckled ruefully. 'I can't even answer that for myself, Prentice. We'll find somewhere for you.

There are hundreds of seaside resorts in Britain, many of them stuck in the past without the need for any technology.'

Another coughing fit struck Craig, riddling his body with

convulsions. `We don't have much time: warned the

Doctor.

Without a word, Prentice left the room.

Craig's eyes flicked open, like a vampire at sunset. The Doctor leaned forward until his mouth was at Craig's

ear.

A consummate performance, my boy. You'll be home by this time tomorrow:

`Hooray! Did I get the whoop right.'

Ìt was worthy of Olivier?

'Who?'

Susan had returned the following morning, to his relief, gabbling nonsense about buried treasure and smugglers and

wanting to buy herself a good strong torch. Earth was fab, she claimed, now that they had stopped chopping off

the heads of anyone posh. She was most put out that the holiday was at an end, but the Doctor bought her a

Knickerbocker Glory and assured her they would stay on Earth, albeit in a later era where the music might be

more to her taste.

The Doctor yawned and readjusted his hanky. He was snatching a last forty winks on the Prom, followed by a

quick paddle, before life got back to normal. He and Prentice had been up all night devising a working scheme

for the Reversal (as they had dubbed it), and blast-off was scheduled in a couple of hours' time.

Craig was furious as this meant that he had to stay in bed all day, coughing, but the Doctor had sneaked him

in some chocolate and back Issues of *The Champion* and *Film Fun.*

Mrs H was most put out when he had asked for his bill to be reckoned. She had asked if he was leaving and

when he had replied in the affirmative, had seemed almost upset. He had assured that she would soon fill his

room, but judging by the way her eyes had filled with tears she was obviously unconvinced.A shame, he hadn't

realised she was so dependent on his custom. Still, couldn't be helped.

A rumble of thunder caught the Doctor's attention. He gazed out to the horizon, darker than usual. A storm was

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on the way.

A little girl no sooner stood back to view her completed masterpiece, a sandcastle fit for a fairy-tale princess, than

her big sister, with a scream and a hefty leap, demolished the edifice in one bound.The girl's face instantly

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crumpled, and she chased after her big sister, brandishing her spade with fury.

The Doctor smiled.

It was sad that it all had to end, but even paradise can be wearing after a while. It's the bad times that make the

good times stand out in relief -and the people of Keelmouth had a tough period looming.

Ting-a-ling!

Signor Morelli waved to his best customer as he trundled past on his tricycle, the 'Stop Me & Buy One' sign rattling

in time to the spin of the wheels.

The Doctor waved back, stuffed his hanky back in his pocket, packed his shaded pince-nez away, unrolled his

trouser legs, and set off to buy a final ice cream.

Chocolate, he decided.

Mortlake

Mark Wright

Dr Evelyn Smythe, BA, Ph.D., stepped from the door of the TARDIS into blazing sunshine to find the Doctor with his

colourful back to her, looking out from the bank of a sweeping river, breathing in deep lungfuls of air. He turned to

her, his face beaming widely.

Just take in that air, Evelyn! Fresh as a daisy!'

Evelyn frowned. 'It smells of manure,' she said, pulling the door of the TARDIS shut and moving to avoid a chicken

that clucked by her feet.

`That's history for you.'The Doctor smiled, turning back to gaze over the river. Evelyn stepped up beside him The

swell of the river had a familiar look about it.

A rowboat passed by, cutting through the water, laden down with goods, and Evelyn had a slight thrill when she

saw how the captain was dressed.They were in Earth's past.

'1540s?' she hazarded. The Doctor bellowed a cheery greeting to another boat slicing through the swell.

'Oh, very good. And almost right. 1560s. Sixty-eight to be exact' `Where are we? Looks like the Thames if I'm

not mistaken'

`Right again, Dr Smythe'

`Well step back from the edge, Doctor. I've fished you out of this river twice already, and I'm not about to do it

again'

`Swimming is not what I had in mind:The Doctor glanced over with an expectant twinkle in his eye. 'Recognise where

we are?'

Evelyn turned away from the river and cast her eyes over the ramshackle collection of cottages and

outbuildings that were scattered just beyond the river path. Here and there, people were going about their business,

adding to the sense of a small but bustling community.

`No. Haven't a clue'

The Doctor let his disappointment show. 'Oh, Evelyn!' He spread his arms wide. "this is the village of Mortlake!'

`So? That's down Richmond way, isn't it?'

Think about it. Mortlake. 1568:

Evelyn stared blankly at the Doctor. 'I'm sorry to say, that I have no idea why the village of Mortlake would be of so

much interest to me:

The Doctor's face fell. 'Oh. I thought this was your era of expertise? Good Queen Bess and all that:

'It is, but that doesn't mean every obscure river hamlet of the time, does it?'

`But Mortlake at this time was home to Dr John Dee. Surely you must know that?'

'Dr John D...' Evelyn suddenly recognised the name. 'Oh, you mean the astronomer chap?'

— Astronomer chap"?' The Doctor looked aghast. `Dr John Dee was one of Elizabeth's closest confidantes'

Ì'm afraid to say that, as far as I was aware, he doesn't play much

of a part in the history books. Bit of a crank by

all accounts'

`Well, *Dr* Smythe, I believe a common saying in your century is: don't believe everything you read:The Doctor

stomped over to the TARDIS and made sure the door was locked.

Ìs this going to be one of those "you can't know history until you've experienced it first hand" conversations?'

Ì wouldn't presume to lecture you on that which you know so well,' said the Doctor.

`Good.You're learning,' Evelyn smiled.

The Doctor smiled back and led the way off the river path into the village of Mortlake.

A little boy played with some roughly carved wooden soldiers on a patch of grass close to the collection of dwellings as

the Doctor swept into view, looking for all the world as if he owned the place. Evelyn struggled to keep up in his

wake.

On seeing the boy, the Doctor broke into his widest grin and squatted down on his haunches to get a better look at

the toys, the boy looking at this colourful figure with curiosity

`My, this is a fine collection you have here! Who's winning?' The boy pointed to a line of the toys. 'Marvellous!' The

Doctor moved from his haunches to his knees and leant in conspiratorially to the boy. 'Shall we see this lot off then?'

The boy smiled and nodded, lining up his regiment for a final assault, the Doctor helping.

Evelyn sighed and looked heavenwards. 'I give up sometimes' She coughed.

The Doctor looked up. 'Yes? Something the matter, Evelyn?'

`We were here to see somebody, Doctor, not recreate the battle of Agincourt'

The Doctor's brow furrowed for a second. 'Were we? Oh...' His face cleared. 'Of course! Dee:

Evelyn closed her eyes and shook her head slowly from side to side, wondering if it might be a good idea to get a

Time-Lord-sized set of children's reins for him.

Ì'm terribly sorry, my young friend,' the Doctor said to the boy. 'But we're going to have to leave this battle for

you to win:The child's face fell.

`But you could help us with some important information. Where can I find the house of Dr John Dee?'

The boy pointed to a large building not too far away.The Doctor smiled "Thank you very much!' He held his hand

up and a gold coin appeared From thin air, which he tossed in the air, caught and flicked over to the boy. The

boy looked with wide eyes at the gleaming coin.

`Don't spend it all at once; the Doctor said as he struggled to his feet. The boy ran off with his new-found

fortune, the soldiers forgotten. The Doctor began to walk in the direction the lad had pointed.Ìve wanted to meet

Dee for ages.' The Doctor looked back at Evelyn gleefully. 'But I've never quite managed to pluck up the nerve just

to turn up and say hello:

Ìf it's going to be like that time you asked for W.G. Grace's autograph, I'm off back to the TARDIS. I thought

he'd never stop chasing us down the road:

The Doctor harrumphed with embarrassment, and strode on.

Ì'm sorry, Doctor, but I'm having trouble getting excited over some quack who used to do Queen Elizabeth's

horoscope'

`Remind me, Evelyn. What's your doctorate in again? Basket weaving?' `Charming!'

Ì'm sorry' the Doctor spluttered, `but calling Dr Dee "some quack who used to do Queen Elizabeth's horoscope" is

like saying that Einstein was somebody who dabbled in physics at weekends!'

`What was so brilliant about him?'

The Doctor stop 142

ped and turned, sta 141

rting to list off points on his fingers. `He had a penchant for promoting maths

as the basis for science, he is credited with working out the calculations to use the Gregorian calendar, and it was

he who suggested that the fleet be held off whilst a storm decimated the Spanish Armada. His understanding of

navigation was instrumental in guiding the first expeditions through the Northwest Passage'

Evelyn looked uncomfortable. Ì suppose that's...'

Ìmpressive?' the Doctor finished for her.

`Yes, all right,' she mumbled back at him.

The Doctor started to walk towards the house. Ùnfortunately, he also

4 had a reputation for being a conjurer and wizard with a talent for communicating with the spirit world. He

was sometimes called the Merlin of Mortlake:

`What did I say? A quack!' said Evelyn, triumphantly folding her arms.

`Dee lived in a time of great change. A scientist who straddled a

world of superstition and disbelief on the one

side, on the other, a civilisation that was slowly awakening to scientific understanding. Had he been born in your

time, or even a hundred years later, he would have been known as the greatest scientist who ever lived'

Ì suppose:

"mink about what Newton achieved barely a stone's throw away temporally speaking, and look how he's

remembered:

`Put like that, Doctor...'

`Ha! Got you!'The Doctor pointed a finger excitedly`Now,' he said. Best behaviour. We're here.'

Evelyn and the Doctor stood outside the riverside residence of Dr John Dee. It was a typical dwelling of the

period.Across the modest grounds lay a pleasant-looking orchard, and it nestled opposite what she could only assume

was the village church.

Evelyn, despite herself, was starting to warm to the Doctor's subject. All right, Doctor, I'll concede that you may

have a point. Can we please get this over with and go and meet the man?'

The Doctor began walking towards the main house. 'I think we may have to meet somebody else first,' he called

back. Evelyn started to follow. `What?'

Dee doesn't actually own this house. When he returned from Europe, he did what any self-respecting scholar

suffering from financial embarrassment would' The Doctor had stopped at the door, waiting for Evelyn to catch

up.

`What's that?' she asked, coming alongside.

`Moved in with his mother.' The Doctor knocked on the door.

After a moment, the door creaked open and a suspicious pair of eyes glinted out from the darkness. `What do you

want?' heaved a cracked voice that wavered somewhere between male and female, but Evelyn came down on the

side of the latter.

The Doctor's face broke into his widest, most beaming smile, reserved only for: 'Good morning, madam"

`Well?'

The Doctor's face fell slightly. 'Oh. Erm...' He flashed an apologetic glance at Evelyn. Is John in?' Evelyn looked

heavenwards at the absurdity of the situation, but smiled all the same.

A wrinkled hand appeared out of the darkness and pointed across the yard towards an outbuilding. 'Over there!'

coughed the voice and before the Doctor could offer his most charming 'Thank you!' the door slammed shut.

The Doctor frowned, looking at the dosed door. 'I usually do so well with mothers: He sighed, looking to where

Mrs Dee had pointed. 'Come on,' he said and began to walk towards the outbuilding.

As they reached the door, the Doctor raised his hand to knock, but it opened sharply. Before them stood Dr John

Dee.

Evelyn was immediately taken aback by the intensity of the eyes. Light brown and burning with intelligence.

They regarded the Doctor and

Evelyn from a distinguished face that tapered into a light, almost blond beard, flecked with patches of brown. The

skullcap, ruff and long robes gave all the deserved appearance of a satanic magician.

The Doctor stepped forward and grabbed Dee's hand, pumping it vigorously 'Dr Dee, I presume?' he asked

delightedly.

a. Ìndeed: Evelyn was surprised at how... ordinary his voice sounded.

Ànd whom do I have the pleasure of addressing, sir?'

This -' the Doctor gestured to Evelyn - 'is my very good friend, Dr Evelyn Smythe: Dee looked at her with

that intense gaze and bowed graciously

`Your servant, madam: Evelyn blushed, managing a curt nod back.

And I am known as the Doctor:' The Doctor, as Dee had done, bowed low.

Dee's face immediately lit up and he grabbed the Doctor by the arms. `Doctor?'

`Yes' The Doctor was taken aback for a second but regained his social grace quickly. 'We have travelled far to

seek the wisdom of the famed Dr Dee, and to talk, in general, on points of science'

Dee smiled slyly`You are modest, Doctor. I wager you have not travelled so far as London. An advisor to the

Queen, keen to see the fruits of my latest voyage?'

The Doctor hesitated. 'Well... ' He stopped short as Evelyn stepped forward, stomping deliberately and

obviously on his foot. He grimaced in pain and hopped backwards, leaving Evelyn room to take charge.

`You are too shrewd, Dr Dee,' she smiled`We are, as you guessed,

on the road from London'

Ah, old Dudley can't resist can he? He hears that great things are afoot in the house of John Dee and sends his

spies!' He smiled, showing a warmingly infectious side to his character`Come in, come in!'

He began to usher Evelyn in through the door. She looked back at the Doctor, who had finished his painful

hopping routine. `Coming, Doctor?' she giggled and stepped through the door.

The Doctor glared at her, shot his cuffs and stomped through the door.

Evelyn's eyes slowly adjusted to the darkness of Dee's main laboratory room. Candles burned at intervals

throughout the room, and there was a definite aroma of incense tinging the air, causing her to sneeze. She felt a

hand on her shoulder.

`Bless you, said the Doctor.

Dee walked in behind the Doctor and closed the door`You have a chill, Dr Smythe? I could concoct a remedy

tincture for you:

Evelyn declined as politely as possible, put off by the whiff of manure that attempted to attract her attention

from a dingy corner of the room.

`May I?' the Doctor gestured around the room.

`Please: Dee seemed more than happy to show his new guests around the laboratory. The Doctor bounded

around like a big labrador from one side of the room to another, his eyes bright with enthusiasm Dee followed him

round, explaining each piece of equipment and arcane-looking experiment that lined the workbenches and

shelves.

Evelyn left them to it and began to wander around the room.A passage led off from the main room and she glanced

down it. Shelf after shelf of books lined the walls beyond, of every size imaginable. She picked up a couple of volumes

at random. There appeared to be no method to the library's filing system, the first being a book on the Armenian

Church, the second some arcane writings on the nature of the Cabala.A third looked to be plans for something

called the Paradoxicall Compass. Evelyn sensed that there were many more corridors of books beyond this

one passageway, but didn't want to stray too far from the Doctor and stepped back into the room.

As she gazed around the laboratory of Dr Dee, Evelyn once again realised the privileged nature of her travels

with the Doctor, to live and breath the history she adored so much as it happened. She ran her fingers over a piece of

navigational apparatus, real and solid to her touch, before casting her eyes over a parchment, containing what

appeared to be a freshly written letter to the Queen.

Evelyn Smythe was far too discreet to read private correspondence, but noticed that the letter was signed, not in the

name of John Dee, but with the symbol '007'. She frowned for a second, confused. The Doctor appeared behind

her, looking down at the letter over her shoulder.

Ì don't understand, she whispered to the Doctor.

Ah, yes. Dee, John Dee, he whispered back cryptically

`Beg pardon?'

The Doctor glanced at Dee, who was stooped over a bench across the room, before speaking. 'It's a few years

off yet, but Dee was very influential in the formation of the secret service. He even undertook a lot of espionage

activities on behalf of the Queen. The 007 symbol was his personal call sign to the Queen, and it's largely accepted that

a certain Ian Fleming took some of his inspiration from Dee.'

Ì don't believe it:

`Believe what you will. Look at him, Evelyn: They both glanced across

the room to see Dee flicking through the pages of a book and scratching

something feverishly onto a fresh roll of parchment. 'He's a genius: Dee looked up sharply at that moment.

'What was that?' he asked. Òh, nothing, the Doctor called over.

Dee picked up a large, bound volume from the table in front of him and moved to the centre of the room. 'This is

what I wager you have travelled

from London to see. Evelyn noticed that Dee had become more agitated as if he was desperate to please.

Òh, yes? And what would that be?' The Doctor stepped forward his curiosity piqued.

Dee placed the book on an ornate table and stepped back with almost ceremonial reverence. *'The Steganographia:*

`The Stega what?' Evelyn tried to get a look around the Doctor, who had stepped forward to examine the book.

A volume that will revolutionise our civilisation, and the greatest work of Trithemius:

Èarly cryptology expert: the Doctor said, answering Evelyn's

puzzled look. 'Excellent chap. He once helped me out with

a particularly difficult *Times* crossword'

Dee looked from Evelyn to the Doctor and back again, and the Doctor smiled, dismissing his comments with a wave of his

hand.

And just what is this book supposed to do?' asked Evelyn.

`Communication,' began Dee in a not-at-all rehearsed fashion, 'is primitive, costly and prolonged.To send a message

across the continents requires planning and many days, sometimes months, of a journey, with no guarantee that the message will

reach its destination:

'I can't argue with that, agreed Evelyn. The Doctor had picked up the book and was examining the outer binding.

`Where did you get this?' he asked.

Antwerp. *The Steganographia* is a fabled text amongst scholars, not least for the secrets it claims to unlock. I had

word that a copy had surfaced in the city, and travelled there immediately to meet with a nobleman of Hungary who

lent me his, for the purposes of copying. I worked for ten days and ten nights to complete the task:

"That's what I call cramming, said Evelyn.

`Since my return to England,' continued Dee, 'I have been devoting my time to divining the wonders of *The*

Steganograpbia:

`Which are?' the Doctor asked, about to delve into the pages of the heavy volume.

Ìnstantaneous communication: he declared grandly

`What?' Evelyn asked, somewhat incredulously.

"The words within the book are powerful formulae, a key to summoning one of many spirits. When the spirit

appears before you, it will take any message, written in any language, and appear before the recipient instantly, delivering

the message after the utterance of another formula.Tonight, I am going to complete my work and send a message to the

Queen using this very system:

`Sort of like medieval email: Evelyn laughed, looking at the Doctor to share the joke. The Doctor wasn't smiling. His

face was buried in the

book, eyes darting backwards and forwards across the complex text. A dark expression clouded his face and he shut the

book with a loud thud, fixing Dee with his most intense, serious gaze. Evelyn immediately sensed trouble.

`Doctor, what is it?'

Ì'm sorry, but I cannot allow this experiment to continue:

Dee returned the Doctor's stare, their eyes meeting in the centre of the roomÀnd who are you to tell me that?'

Ì am the Queen's envoy,' the Doctor declared, rising up, 'and I forbid you to continue.'

Ì am devoted to the Queen.' Dee rose equally to the Doctor's challenge. `But her court pays me little heed. This will make

them sit up and ta 1

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notice, and I *will* complete my work!' He stepped forward, robes swishing, and snatched the

book from the Doctor's surprised grasp.

`John,' the Doctor pleaded. 'You will be making a terrible mistake!'

`Then it will be my mistake to make, sir. Now, leave, or step aside and let me work!'

The Doctor glared angrily, not at Dee, but at the book, before turning and striding to Evelyn's side

Are we leaving?' she asked.

Absolutely not,' the Doctor growled`We need to protect this... idiot' `He was a genius a second ago,' Evelyn said

lightly, but the Doctor's warning look told her this was not the time for games.

They watched Dee move around the room, lighting candles and incense. As he picked up *The Steganographia,* he

threw the Doctor a warning look, the meaning of which was only too clear. He stepped into the centre of the room and

opened the book, placing it on the ornate table it had originally rested on.

Dee raised his arms in the air and began to speak in a deep, intoning boom. *Padiel aporsy m esarpon om euas*

peludyn m alpreaxo! Condusen, vlearo thersephi bayl merphon, paroys gebuly mailtbomyon ilthear tamarson acrimy

Ion peatba Casmy Chertiel, medony reabdo, l a s o n t i l a c i e l m a l a r t s b u l o m e o n a b r y p a t b u l m o n t b e o m a

parthormyni

The Doctor pulled his pocket watch out as soon as Dee finished speaking, flicking open the gold front. The air in the

middle of the room began to glisten and warp as a cloud of sparkling colour billowed out from nowhere.

Evelyn clutched urgently at the Doctor's arm. 'Doctor, what's happening?'

`Nothing to worry about... I hope!'

`Very encouraging!' Evelyn flinched slightly as the Doctor placed the palm of his hand on her head, pushing her down

gently.

And keep your head down!'

Evelyn took the Doctor's advice and crawled a short distance to take cover behind one of Dee's belaboured work

benches. She peered through a gap in a precariously stacked pile of books to see Dee staring up with wide, inquisitive

eyes into the sparkle of lights.

`Fascinating...' he gasped.

The cloud suddenly erupted outwards, filling the room with a firework display of confusion, before reforming with a

loud whip-crack into a shimmering, whorling vortex suspended a few feet above Dee's head

Evelyn's ears popped at the sudden changes in air pressure and she blinked her eyes against the tide of pinprick

lights that insisted on tap-dancing across her retina.

The Doctor stood watching, frowning, light spilling from the vortex and

playing across his face, shifting across the spectrum every few seconds. She hated it when he deliberately placed

himself in the best position to look enigmatic.

The wind slowly dissipated, leaving only the sweeping hiss of the vortex to fill the room. A sudden crackle of

static made the hairs on the back of Evelyn's neck stand on end. Tendrils of blue-green energy began to snake from the

epicentre of the vortex, crackling with power as they struck the floor in front of Dee. His eyes widened even further.

Something was starting to form, a figure. A very large figure.

Dee could hardly contain himself'It works,' he breathed ecstatically. 'It works!'

Ònly too well,' the Doctor muttered, calmly replacing his pocket watch and folding his arms.

The figure rapidly taking on solid form before the kneeling Dr Dee was humanoid but definitely *not* human It was at

least eight feet tall and its scaled body was punctuated with thick, veiny, gnarled muscles. A ridge of plated scales ran up

from the base of the creature's spine, all the way to the nape of its neck, alternating red and black in colour, a nasty

contrast to the bottle-green scales covering the rest of its body.The creature started to look around now, its feline eyes, set

back from a dog-like snout, darting around curiously.

Considering that a very large, very frightening monster had materialised in front of his very eyes, Dee was taking it

remarkably calmly, which impressed Evelyn no end. Even now, after all this time with the Doctor, she usually wanted to run

back to the TARDIS as fast as her heart would let her for a sit down and a cuppa when confronted with one of these

things. Dee just looked up with rapt attention, taking in every detail of the creature, *The Steganograpbia* still

clutched in his arms. Could the words in the book alone have conjured this demon from the ether? And when was the

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Doctor going to do something?

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The creature had now taken full form and the vortex disappeared with an almost comic popping noise. All that

could be heard was the hiss of wax falling from a burning candle, and the deep breathing of the creature.

Dee slowly climbed to his feet, his eyes never wavering. He threw his arms wide in supplication.

`Welcome, 0' Padiel. I beseech thee to do my bidding...'

The demon cocked its head to one side, weighing Dee up. Its mouth opened into what could have been a grin,

showing a line of yellowed, sharp teeth. A thread of saliva dropped from the tip of a canine, hung for a second,

glinting in the flamed light of the room before dropping to the floor.Then, as if it were an afterthought, the creature

opened its huge jaw and released the most frightening, bone-jarring roar Evelyn had ever heard.

Dee was nearly blown off his feet, his skullcap flying backwards in the wave of fetid, rank breath. His face turned

from one of rapt fascination to abject fear before common sense took over and he fainted clean away, falling as

easily as one of those little toy soldiers the boy had played with. H e c o l l a p s e d o n t o t h e f l o o r i n a r a g g e d h e a p

o f r o b e s , *The Steganographia* slipping from his hands.

The demon looked down and sniffed, shrugging its shoulders.

Ahem."The Doctor finally stepped forward and the creature looked first one way, then the other before spotting

him. Its snouted face broke into a wide smile of recognition.

'Doctor!' The creature lumbered forward happily, arms stretched wide. The Doctor put his hands up in protest.

`Yes, hello, Padiel. Can we save the hugs for another time?'

The demon, who Evelyn had guessed by now was called Padiel, stopped short, face falling in disappointment. Oh'

Ah, might I introduce my friend?' The Doctor gestured to Evelyn's hiding place. Dr Evelyn Smythe'

Evelyn shot a hand up from behind the table, calling a cheery hello. Òh, do get up, Evelyn!'

Evelyn got to her feet and smiled weakly in the direction of the

Doctor's new friend.

`Very nice to meet you, Dr Smythe.Any friend of the Doctor's ... '

`Yes, well,' the Doctor briskly interjected, stepping forward and kneeling

down to check on the consciously absent Dee, taking his pulse and

satisfying himself that all was well. He picked up *The Steganographia.* `*What can* I do for you, then. Why did you

summon me?'

Ì didn't; said the Doctor, carefully closing the book and pointing to Dee. 'He did?'

Òh.And who's that, then?'

"That, is Dr John Dee'

'Never heard of him'

'Yes, well, that's not uncommon, but he happens to be one of the finest minds you'll find around this part of the

galaxy. Just not the right kind of mind to deal with you:

Evelyn had finally had enough and stepped between the Doctor and Padiel.'That's it! Doctor, what is going on?' In the

background, Dee started to snore.

'Yes, I'm sorry. Dee was right about the book. Or at least, the words in it - this is a copy, remember?'

'Copied from the original in Antwerp?'

'Yes, and I have some grave suspicions about this "nobleman of Hungary" he mentioned, but, copied or not,

the words in this book are incredibly powerful psionic key sequences to activate a rather sophisticated

communication system'

Next to the Doctor, Padiel blushed blue with embarrassment. "s nice of you to' say so, Doctor.'

Evelyn looked down at Dee, wide eyed`You mean he was right?'

'Yes. When I flicked through the book, I recognised the source of the words, namely the planet Sintra, where they

communicate over vast distances using these sequences'

'How?'

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'By using hyper-in 159

te0lligent avatars like our friend here' The Doctor slapped Padiel heartily on the back.

Evelyn's head was spinning, and it wasn't just from the incense fumes. 'I don't understand.'

'The inhabitants of Sintra are advanced in the mechanics of psionic engineering: explained the Doctor. 'Combined

with their telepathic abilities, when uttered in sequence, these words will activate a certain channel of sub-space, through

which they communicate with the avatars, who deliver any message, information, or physical goods, instantaneously to the

desired recipient.'

'Seems a bit of a rigmarole if you ask me.'

'It's a very beautiful way of communicating.'

Padiel choked. 'Doctor, stop it!'

The problem is, without the psionic talent to control the avatar, being a mischievous bunch, they'll get up to all kinds

of havoc given half the chance once summoned'

'You can't change what you are, Doctor,' grinned Padiel.

'And I take it from your familiarity with our friend here, that you

can control these avatars?'

'I've had a pen pal on Sintra for a number of centuries, and am quite adept at using the system; said the Doctor.

'Oh, the Doctor's a natural'

`Yes, and I need you to pop back into sub-space before Dr Dee wakes up. It's a good job I was here. Lord

knows what havoc you'd have wreaked otherwise.

`Right you are, Doctor.'

The vortex began to appear behind the avatar

Òh, while you're here,' the Doctor remembered. 'You may as well deliver a message. Just tell her... 'The Doctor

began to make a series of clicking, gulping noises in his throat that finished with a grinding of his teeth. Padiel looked

shocked.

`You saucy old devil, Doctor! Nice to meet you, Dr Smythe! And with that, Padiel turned and dived head first

through the vortex, which sealed with a pop as soon as his feet disappeared from view.

The Doctor looked sideways at Evelyn, who put up her hands. 'I'm not even going to ask what you said'

Behind the Doctor and Evelyn, a groaning reminded them of Dr Dee's presence. Evelyn turned to see him coming

round, a hand massaging his temples as he struggled to sit up.

The Doctor walked over quickly to help him. 'My dear chap, how are you feeling?'

Òh, my head'

`Perhaps laying off the home brew after dinner might be advisable in future,' the Doctor cautioned.

`What happened?' Dee looked around quickly, alarm showing on

his face. 'The book. *The Steganographia!*`

The Doctor handed the book over`Here it is, safe and sound' Dee clutched it to his chest protectively

What do you remember?' Evelyn asked.

Ì started the ritual, there was a flare of light, then...' He paused for a moment, furrowing his brow `Then, I can't

remember'

Ì think those candles you use are a bit potent.A chemical reaction with the incense must have knocked you out.'The

Doctor glanced up at Evelyn guiltily, who returned his look with a raised eyebrow.

`But did it work?' Dee asked, desperation lining his face.

The Doctor pulled Dee to his feet and helpfully dusted down the front of his robes before looking into his eyes with a

sad smileÌ'm afraid not' `Nothing?' Dee's eyes were wide.

The Doctor shook his head`Nothing, he said, quietly.

As he breathed out, Evelyn could have sworn he shrank, the enormous robes suddenly looking three sizes too big.

She was mildly irritated by the lump that formed in her throat, fighting back a tear that threatened to give away

her sadness at Dee's reaction to his failure.

The Doctor placed a hand on Dee's shoulder 'I'm so sorry`

Dee didn't appear to hear. He wandered slowly over to his desk and sat

heavily in the chair. He opened *The Steganographia* and began to flick idly through the pages, deflated.

Ì was so sure, he breathed. 'So sure'

Evelyn sighed as she regarded the faded blue legend above the double glass door that served as the entrance to a rather

depressing building.

JOHN DEE HOUSE

Three words in nineteen-sixties-style lettering.

Èxcuse me: said a voice behind her and she turned to look at the young man who addressed her. He could easily have been

an old student, but she didn't recognise him.

`Yes?' she asked, looking over her glasses.

The lad looked back, confused. 'Erm; he gestured behind her. Can I get past please? You're blocking the way.'

Evelyn blushed, embarrassed. 'I'm terribly sorry' she said, moving awkwardly out of the way to let him through.

The lad threw her a confused, 'Oh, you must be the new local loony' kind of look as he went past, letting the door to the

block of flats slam shut behind him.

Evelyn stepped back and looked up at Dee's name above the door once more. She barely heard the footsteps behind her.

Èxcuse me?'

Evelyn turned irritably Òh." The Doctor beamed at her. 'It's you' The Doctor gave an affronted sniff.

`Sorry Doctor. Did you manage to swap the book?'

`Yes, thankfully. I climbed in through the library window the night after we were there. And therein lies a whole other

adventure, but, thankfully, the copy of *The Steganographia* now in Dee's possession contains harmless words that

wouldn't be able to conjure up a mushroom stroganoff let alone a rampaging spirit'

Evelyn sighed.

`What is it?' the Doctor asked, his head cocking to one side in concern.

`Did you see the look of disappointment on his face when we told him the ritual hadn't worked? He was crushed. He'd

been so certain that he was right. And do you what the sad thing is?'

'What?'

`He *was* right, and we had to take that away from him. And yes -' she held up a hand before the Doctor could speak -

'I do know we had no choice'

Ìt won't take away all of his other achievements. And the privilege of being able to travel through time is that we

know he was right?

Ànd then there's this place!' Evelyn gestured around her. 'Just look at

it!'

`Hmm, Mortlake 2004 isn't the most salubrious of areas, I have to agree. I miss the manure' He sniffed the air and

wrinkled his nose. 'What *is* that smel ?'

Evelyn pointed accusingly across the road. 'That!' The sprawling complex of a brewery blocked out almost

everything in sight, silvery towers and faceless buildings between the Doctor and Evelyn and the Thames path

where they'd stood almost 500 years before.The bitter smell of hops tinged the air. 'It's built right on the site of

Dee's house. And is there a plaque to tell people that? Is there fig!'

Ì see:

`This block of flats!' She gestured even more irritably at the name above the door. 'It's the only mark that this

brilliant man ever resided here. Not so much as a museum!'

The Doctor's solemn expression slowly widened into that mischievous smile that always meant trouble, usually

taking the form of a bad joke. Ì was just wondering.You *are* Evelyn Smythe, aren't you?'

`Well, of course I'm Evelyn Smythe: Her eyes narrowed suspiciously. `What are you up to?'

Ì have a favour to ask,' the Doctor said, rummaging in the inside pocket of his coat.

Àh...' The Doctor looked more than a little sheepish as he pulled a hardback book from his pocket. He started to

hand it over, then sto 15

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ce. 'I really shouldn't have, but after I swapped the book, I popped forward

a couple of years to do a spot of book shopping myself. There's a marvellous Waterstones off Piccadilly Circus.The

café at the top does the most wonderful chunky chips...'

`Doctor: Evelyn frowned good-naturedly at her friend and the Doctor took the hint. He handed the book over,

smiling warmly

Ì thought this might cheer you up.'

Evelyn read the cover. The *Merlin of Mortlake:The Life and Talents of Dr John Dee.'* She shrugged. 'It's just a

biography`

`Who wrote it?'

Evelyn almost dropped the book when she saw her own name sitting at the foot of the cover.The Doctor's grin

widened even further. But... but I haven't written...'

`No. But you will' The Doctor took the book from Evelyn's hands and read from the back.—Smythe writes with a

clarity of vision that makes you think she was actually there" - ***The Times Literary Supplement?***

Ì don't know what to say' Evelyn was astounded.

The thing is, a person can be removed from time, Evelyn, but it doesn't always involve absurd alien-abduction plots

or tedious time distortion. Sometimes a man's ideas are too... advanced or even truthful for a

civilisation to comprehend and history has no choice but to look the other way. When that happens, it's up to

people with unique talents to put them back. People like you.'

Evelyn smiled. Thank you, Doctor.'

`My pleasure, Doctor.' The Doctor delved into his pocket again and it brandished a handsome looking

fountain pen. 'I wondered if you could sign it for me?'

Evelyn opened the book to the title page and took the pen from the Doctor, scratching a heartfelt message for a

man she considered to be her greatest, dearest friend. She looked up for a second before starting to turn the pages to

chapter oneÌ don't suppose I could...'

The Doctor immediately snatched the book from her hands, a mother slapping the fingers of a child going for the

cake mix at the bottom of the bowl`No, you cannot read the first page! You'll just have to figure out the first line for

yourself like every other writer in history'

Evelyn sniffed. 'Spoilsport.' A spot of rain landed on the pavement, the grey sky holding promise of more to

comèBack to the TARDIS?'

The Doctor pursed his lips and thought for a second. You know, I never thought I'd find myself saying this,' said

the Doctor, looking across the road towards the brewery

Evelyn linked arms with the Doctor. What's that?'

`Fancy a pint?'

White Man's Burden

John Binns

Part One

Pretoria, Transvaal. 11 April 1877, 1 lam

As is very often the way when history is being made, the atmosphere in Church Square gives no outward sign that

anything momentous is about to happen.There are people here, of course: just as it will be for centuries to come,

the square is the very heart of the town, and a place where residents and visitors alike congregate, discuss

matters business and personal, and pass the time of day. At this point in the Transvaal's history Pretoria's population

is typified by the small, discrete groupings in the square: here, a few dozen or so of the Boer farmers and

townspeople; there, a much smaller group of white businessmen, mainly English, gathered around the Dutch

Reformed Church.

It is this latter group, growing in number as the winter morning draws on, that gives perhaps the best clue to

what is due to happe 15n5.Though you might expect to see a few of the English here at this time of day, there are a few

more than usual, seemingly gathered together in expectation. But it Is not a large crowd - more like dozens than

hundreds, really - implying that whatever the occasion they are waiting for, it can't be a particularly ground-

breaking event. Decades from now, the memorial service for the then head of state, Paul Kruger, would draw tens

of thousands into this square. In comparison, today, a mere handful will witness the annexation of the Transvaal.

This is very much 15

a 6conscious decision by the British authorities, in fact, for whom any spectacle or show of force

would be an unacceptable risk. In contrast to the sound of fury of many contemporaneous colonial adventures,

this annexation is cautious, experimental, and pragmatically low-key. It will be another month before the first

British battalion arrives from Natal, and the celebrations will be carried out in earnest. Today, it is only seven tweed-

jacketed English officials who arrive in the square to make the proclamation. For the time being, it is still the four-

coloured flag of the South African Republic that flies from the government buildings, rather than the Union Jack.

Nevertheless, it is today that these seven - deputed to the task by the British Special Commissioner, Sir Theopilus

Shepstone - will formally announce the decision to make the Transvaal part of the British Empire.

They line up in the centre of the square, the crowd gathering around them at a respectable distance. The

bespectacled chap in the middle is Melmeth Osborn, Secretary to the Mission, and the piece of paper he holds in

his hand is the proclamation from Shepstone himself.The young man next to him is Henry Rider Haggard,

Shepstone's twenty-one-year-old clerk - who, incidentally, will later find fame as the chronicler of legendary adventurer

Allan Quatermain in various novels, including *King Solomon's Mines*. With a cough, the young Haggard calls for the

crowd's attention.

Ànd whereas I have been satisfied by numerous addresses, ceremonials and letters,' Osborn reads,`that a large

proportion of the inhabitants of the Transvaal see the mined condition of the country, and therefore earnestly desire

the establishment within and over it of Her Majesty's authority and rule...'

The crowd cheers politely as the proclamation is read, and the seven men's nervousness seems to abate a little.

There is still time for the quiet little ceremony to turn against them, for one or more of the townspeople - many of

whom are armed, mind you - to take a stand. Though their manner is quiet, there can be no disguising the fact

that they are taking over the country. Their nerves are understandable.

But they have no need to worry. At the side of the square, facing the government offices, a smaller and more gloomy

sort of ceremony is taking place. As a few dozen Boers listen sceptically, a member of Pretoria's Executive Council is

reading a formal protest from the Transvaal's state president, Thomas Burgers. When the protest draws attention to

the Sand River Convention, signed by the British government in 1852, there are nods and grumbles from the

crowd. Britain promised then to respect the Transvaal's independence; now, she is going back on her word. But the

protest is also an exhortation to Burgers's people to remain calm: to avoid bloodshed, his government has agreed to

submit to the British, but would send a deputation to London to try to reverse the annexation. For now at least, the

hope is that a formal protest may be enough, and that Britain's control of their state will be merely temporary.

As it happens, the president is half right. Within a few years the British will lose control of the Transvaal - to

Kruger, who as Burgers's vice president leads the deputation to London - only to gain it again in 1900. Ten years

after that, they will depart for the last time. But Shepstone's announcement today represents an important step

forward for the Empire's colonial ambitions, leading to war with the Zulus, and emboldening the drive to

expand further into Africa. With these two quiet ceremonies in Church Square, history is taking a giant leap

forward.

Or at least, that's how it was *supposed* to happen...

*** * ***

Sitting uncomfortably on the grass and squinting up at the sun, now directly above them, the Doctor was beginning to

worry.Turlough, not for the first time, had leapt to his feet and begun pacing up and down impatiently, occasionally

tutting and kicking his heels.They had been here like this for over an hour, the Doctor reckoned, and he was starting to feel

distinctly foolish

`Do you think we should perhaps *tell* someone that their history's running late?' his companion was saying. 'I mean,

they might not realise they have an audience to cater for: He tutted loudly, almost theatrically as if he had an audience

of his own.

'turlough's sarcasm was becoming insufferable, and there was a subtext behind it the Doctor didn't much like. Instead of

sharing his concern and confusion over what was happening - or rather, not happening - it seemed his companion was

rather assuming that the Doctor himself was somehow at fault. It was as if he took the non-occurrence of a piece of history'

as a personal failure for the Doctor, and worse, it seemed distinctly as if he was taking some pleasure from it.

It wasn't as if the Doctor hadn't considered the possibility of a mistake, apart from anything, not that he'd actually tell

'turlough this. Less than half an hour after they'd arrived in the square, by which time Shepstone's proclamation and

Burgers's protest should both have been read out, he'd mentally gone through a checklist and ruled out the various

possible errors he could have made. Just lately the TARDIS had been running remarkably smoothly, in fact, and there

was no way the date or time of their landing had been wrong. He'd also double-checked the details on the ship's historical

database, allowing for the risk that his own memory had been faulty, and had spent much of the last hour reading one of

Haggard's novels, which included his own account of today's events. Everything had checked out: this was the place, the

time; everything was perfect, except for the event itself. During the time they'd been here hundreds of townspeople

must have come through the square, utterly oblivious that there was anything wrong - even the few who had noticed a

solemn-looking Englishman and his animated young friend apparently whiling the day away on the lawn. It was an odd

sort of situation, the absence of events itself having an ominous sense of menace. It gave the Doctor a distinct sinking

feeling.

`Be honest, Doctor,' turlough said finally, walking back up to him, strolling absently around his friend. 'Couldn't we

have made a mistake somewhere with the timing? Or maybe the history books got it wrong...'

Nice try,Turlough.'No, I'm afraid not. The Doctor looked up at him with a grave expression. The sun shone brightly into

his eyes. 'The historians haven't got it wrong, and neither have we. The problem is with history itself:

Turlough raised his eyebrows. 'How?' he said.

The Doctor sighed. 'I don't know,' he replied, reluctantly 'There's always the possibility of rogue time travellers

interfering with history, but it hardly seems likely here. Besides, I've actually set up an early warning system in the

TARDIS that would alert us to time distortions of that sort, so I can be fairly sure that's not it'

Ànd yet,' Turlough gave the Doctor a mischievous smile, sidling up to him again, his constant pacing wearing away

the yellowing grass, 'history is conspicuously failing to happen. Ergo someone, or something, must have changed it.

Yes?' Again, there was an accusatory quality to his tone. The Doctor stared into space.

`Well... quite,' he said at length.

`So if it's not a time traveller,' Turlough retorted, as if reaching the summit of a mountain of logic, 'what else could it

possibly be?'

The Doctor frowned. 'I've a feeling it could be something a little rarer than that, he said. He looked up at Turlough,

finally succeeding in provoking an expression of alarm which he imagined mirrored his own. `Not to mention

something infinitely more dangerous'

During the short walk to the British consulate, more to raise his own good spirits than anything else, the Doctor had

pointed out various notable local features to Turlough - or rather, various sites where local features were going to be at

some stage in the future. He had pointed out the place where Paul Kruger's statue would stand, and added in what he

hoped was a casual, offhand manner how Kruger's discomfort at posing for it would make the sculptor's job terribly

difficult.

They had stopped at the future site of the Palace of Justice, completed in 1902 and the venue for the trial of Nelson

Mandela in the earl 1

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1 60s, after which the future president and other ANC activists would be sentenced to life

imprisonment.

It had been Turlough, appearing for all the world as if his interest in the subject was purely academic, who had raised the

question: 'But if the annexation doesn't happen today - well, who's to say what effect it could have? How can we know any

of that history still stands?'

Trying not to let show the shiver of fear that ran down his back, and barely missing a step, the Doctor had answered with

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some speculation. He wondered aloud who would have made a move on the Transvaal if the British hadn't - Holland,

possibly, he mused, but more probably Germany. More important was the fact that the Zulu war wouldn't be provoked for

some time, or possibly, that it might occur without any British involvement.

As for the longer term consequences,' he had continued, 'it's really too difficult to say. There are schools of thought in

temporal theory that say

that time will act to push a divergent timeline back towards the original it came from - sort of ironing out the

differences, making the changes as subtle as possible. Personally though, I'm afraid I can't see why the alterations to

the timeline wouldn't increase exponentially`

`So,"Turiough had said, as if making an attempt to sum up. 'No Kruger, no Zulu war, no apartheid, no Mandela:

`Well. I don't know,' the Doctor had admitted. 'Possibly' They had been silent for a while after that, until they'd come to

the British consulate. Once the Doctor had sketched out their cover story and persuaded Turlough to straighten his

tie, they'd gone in.

It had taken a good ten minutes to gain the trust of Melmoth Osborn, who had a sharp intellect despite his advancing

years. The Doctor found his habit of constantly donning and removing his glasses distracting, and his long white

whiskers even more so. There had been times during their conversation when his stoop had been so severe, the old

man's head hunched so far over his large, untidy desk, that the Doctor wasn't sure whether he was still listening to him,

or had fallen asleep. His ears had pricked up when the Doctor had mentioned his achievement in swimming his

horse across the Tugela and his presence at the battle of Indondakasuka - as recounted, he claimed (and his fingers were

crossed on this particular point) by his father, who worked for Osborn when he was chief magistrate in Natal.

Without thinking, as he said this he tapped his right hand softly against his right trouser pocket, where he'd stuffed the

copy of Haggard's book. The details were sketchy - after all, he'd only read about them that morning - but they had

done the trick. Osborn had launched into a story about the battle for the next few minutes, and afterwards seemed not to

question the Doctor and 'Furlough's rather vague identities as visiting officials from London.They had talked for a while

about Natal, CapeTown, and Africa in general, before moving on to talk about the Transvaal.

'What the prime minister is interested to know,' the Doctor said, leaning across the desk with as much authority as he

could muster, 'is the time scale of the Special Commissioner's plans for annexation. If I remember correctly, his

appointment last year had the prospect very much in mind:

'Well, I have to disagree, dear boy' Osborn replied, looking up with an effort. Out of the corner of his eye, the Doctor

saw 'Turlough smile mischievously at the phrase. 'Mr Disraeli had the foresight to put the question of annexation

entirely within Shepstone's gift: it is at his discretion, no one else's, whether and when the republic becomes

British.'

'But why not now?'Turlough cut in, a little too enthusiastically.

Osborn adjusted his glasses as he looked at the Doctor's companion, as

if to see his impudence more clearly 'That would clearly be premature,' he said. We have but twenty-five mounted

policemen at our disposal, and a population who despite their problems are hardly clamouring for the Empire's

control. The prime minister's condition was no bloodshed, you should bear in mind. I simply don't see how that could

be achieved at this stage.'

The Doctor tried to hide his exasperation. 'But the country is in a mess,' he said. 'Its treasury is drained, the

support for the government is irrevocably split, the president is phenomenally unpopular. The people live in

constant fear of attack from the Zulus: Cetshwayo could be preparing his troops at this very moment: He

jabbed a finger across the desk for emphasis, but Osborn looked unimpressed. 'The executive is weak, he found

himself saying. 'Believe it or not, if you offer the right jobs to the right people, twenty-five policemen is all you'll

need.'

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Osborn let a few seconds pass, probably out of politeness. It didn't look as if he had even been close to being

convinced.

'I disagree,' he said at length. 'And in any case, it's not my decision to make. The Special Commissioner will

keep the situation under appraisal and act when the time is right, not before.'

A thought occurred to the Doctor; he swallowed his embarrassment and asked the question.'Shepstone hasn't

been acting... at all strangely of late, I suppose?' he said.

Osborn's bewildered stare gave him the answer.

'Or received any advice from anyone, anyone from out of town?' The old man shook his head.

À man wearing black, perhaps, with...' He got as far as miming a goatee beard, before -Turlough stopped him with

a vigorous shake of the head, and what looked distinctly like embarrassment.

`No: Osborn said firmly 'The commissioner keeps his own counsel, and exercises his own discretion. And though I

am sure he and I appreciate your concerns, I am afraid you must

accept that it is his decision to make'

The vast majority of people, of course, are unaware of their place in history. To an individual, the context of an

event or a decision tends to be perceived in very local terms, and even the most significant historical figures seldom

foresee their long-term effects. It's only with hindsight -for those directly involved, perhaps months or years

later when the consequences have panned out and made themselves known; for future generations, the larger-

scale analyses and speculations that pass for `historical perspective' - that the true significance of the event

becomes clear.

In the case of human decisions in particular, of course, there's an argument that such a lack of awareness is

desirable, even necessary. Even

with the limited degree of insight that humans - indeed, that most sentient actors in the universe - have,

awareness of the potential consequences of a decision can be an impediment to action, rather than assisting it. If

we all knew every single variable, every potential consequence of every decision we make, so the argument

goes, we'd be so paralysed by the responsibility that no one would ever make any decisions at all.

There's a fundamental assumption behind this analysis, however: that individuals, when making a decision, are

acting out of what we call 'free will'. Temporal theorists are prone to discussing free will as if it were some kind

of random and unpredictable factor, a wild card in the otherwise foreseeable, mechanical and logical analysis

of cause and effect In the universe. To these theorists, it causes insurmountable problems to factor in such

dangerous ideas to their calculations, and the temptation is to conclude that it is illusory. Even where it appears to

an individual that he has a free choice, the theorists say, it's a necessary conclusion of the reality of history - or as

Gallifrey has come to know it, the Web of Time

that he possesses no such thing.

The Doctor had always had some difficulty with this idea, not least because the idea that he lived in an entirely

predestined universe, in which no one had any real control over their actions, was nothing short of depressing.

And besides, the very fact that the Time Lords, in their wisdom, had come to the provisional conclusion that this

view of the universe was broadly correct predisposed him to reject it. But in his darkest moments, he could

certainly see the logic in, if not dismissing free will completely, restricting its application almost out of existence.

After all, a person's decisions were - if you analysed the process scientifically

made not only in the context of his or her environment, social constraints and the decisions and actions of

others, but also by a mind that had been shaped by their genetic makeup, their upbringing, and at any given

moment their immediate surroundings, their particular mood, and what they had had for breakfast. In terms of

predictability, what the theorists mistook for a lack of causal factors was in fact merely a bewildering

multiplicity of them. Depending on whether you knew every detail of every influence that acted on a person as

the decision was made, it would be every bit as predictable (or not) as any so-called objective event, such as a

chemical reaction in a lab, or next Tuesday's weather.

As unromantic as this conclusion sounded, it at least left some space for individuals to make real decisions:

the apparent conflict between that, and the causal network of history that such decisions cumulatively created,

was purely a matter of perspective. But what really put this theoretical model to the test was the solid reality of

time travel.

1612

When the Doctor and Turlough had arrived in Pretoria, it had been with the certain knowledge that Shepstone's

decision to annex the Transvaal was to be announced that day. From 'Turlough's perspective in particular, it was

history - the event was no doubt related in the history textbooks that lined the shelves of his school in 1983. But

how could they square that with the perspective of Shepstone, or Melmoth Osborn? For them, it was a decision that

hadn't been made yet - indeed, as far as Osborn was concerned, it seemed patently obvious that the annexation

shouldn't happen today. Did Shepstone think, the Doctor wondered, as he mulled the problem over in his mind,

of how his decision would affect the course of history? More than most, perhaps - but what would his reaction be

if the Doctor walked into the office and told him that he'd simply got it wrong, that free will notwithstanding,

he *bad* to annex the Transvaal today?

Of course, though he would balk at the particular method, this was broadly what the Doctor was required to

do. Shepstone might not fully realise his own place in history, but the Doctor was all too aware of his: the Web of

Time must be protected, and history put back on track. There was a part of him that rejoiced in the idea that free

will could, after all, have its place: that even with the unrivalled hindsight of Gallifrey and the Time Lords, the inner

workings of the mind of the Special Commissioner in Pretoria were not quite so predictable after all. But he

had a responsibility, and there was no way he could leave this place without ensuring the annexation went ahead.

The situation bothered him, more so than he thought Turlough really appreciated, certainly more than he was

prepared to let show. It was not only because this exercise of free will, this freedom, that Shepstone was apparently

displaying was going to have to be overridden, but also the particular nature of the decision. More often than not, it

was the Doctor's place in history to take part in the liberation of peoples, to fight against oppressors and to prevent

invasions from outside. And yet here he was, apparently required to play his part in history by triggering a new

phase of British colonialism. With a due sense of irony, he briefly wondered what Tegan would have made of it. The

more he thought about it, the more he wasn't sure what to make of it himself.

They spent the better part of the afternoon trying to get an audience with Shepstone himself, but it was proving

difficult. The man had been in meetings all day, they were told, and would not be available for consultations

with officials from London until at least the latter part of tomorrow morning. Eventually, the Doctor had given up

inveigling and ingratiating himself with the staff of the consulate, and had accepted the reality that they would have

to stay there overnight.Turlough had pulled

a face at this as they stood at the doors of the consulate, and started to say something about being fed up with sleeping in the

TARDIS. Before he could get into specifics, thankfully a young and smartly suited man had sidled up behind them.

Ìf you are in need of accommodation for this evening, I think I may be able to arrange something within the hour,' he

said. It was the first time they had spoken, but the Doctor assumed from the familiarity of the young man's tone that

he had overheard some of the conversations he and 'turlough had had earlier with the consulate staff. He looked as if

he had found an ally

`Mr Haggard, I assume,' the Doctor held out a hand. 'I'm very pleased to meet you. Again, he couldn't help patting the

pocket that contained his book, ensuring it was safely stored out of view.

Haggard shook the Doctor's hand, and then 'turlough's. 'I understand you are keen to discuss matters with the Special

Commissioner,' he said. Ìt is unfortunate you have been unable to do so today, but I feel sure a few words from you will

count all the more if left till tomorrow morning.

Ì should say so. I don't think we're leaving until Pretoria's part of the Empire; Turlough said brightly, before the Doctor

could stop him. To his surprise, Haggard's response could not have been more enthusiastic.

`We shall discuss it on the way!' he beamed. Haggard was already taking large strides down the consulate steps,

beckoning the Doctor and 'furlough forward.

The Doctor shrugged, exchanging glances with his companion, and then followed. It wasn't quite what he'd

expected, but it was useful to have found a friend.

The lodgings Haggard had promised were indeed arranged quickly, but were hardly luxurious, being little more than a pair

of rooms above a large restaurant-cum-public house. 'turlough seemed quite taken with the whole idea, the Doctor

noted, and it would probably cheer both their spirits to spend a night outside the confines of the TARDIS. More

lmportantly, the difficult issue of how to pay for their accommodation without appropriate currency was neatly

bypassed by Haggard, who took it upon himself to negotiate the fee with the landlord and blithely told him that the

consulate would settle it.

They stayed for a meal. To the Doctor's surprise it was Turlough in particular who seemed to hit it off with Haggard,

principally by asking the right sort of questions to elicit the clerk's enthusiastic attitude towards Britain's colonial

ambitions. By the time the two young men had finished their first pint of beer (the Doctor, sipping occasionally at his

lemonade, feeling rather like a fuddy-duddy father figure), Haggard had made it clear that, for what it was worth, he agreed

wholeheartedly with the view from

London (as he thought, anyway): that the annexation could, and should, go ahead as soon as possible. He focused

particularly on the Empire's responsibilities towards Africa, which he pointed out (with an impressive attention to detail)

was persistently showing itself incapable of managing its own affairs. As the conversation progressed and moved on to

other topics, the Doctor couldn't help but tell Haggard something of his friend Allan Quatermain, hoping Turlough

wouldn't notice what he was doing.

It was shortly before eight when they finished their meal, and

though the Doctor and Turlough hadn't realised it at

the time, Haggard had returned to Shepstone's office. The capacity some humans had for withstanding the effects

of alcohol often surprised the Doctor, who wondered how effective any work of Haggard's would be at this stage

Certainly 'turlough (whose physiology, admittedly, was human-like rather than human) was eager to go to sleep after

their eating and drinking session. Then again, that could have had more to do with not having slept for a while: the

Doctor sometimes forgot that travelling in the TARDIS entailed its own extreme form of jetlag.

Turlough was asleep, then, by a quarter past nine when Haggard returned to the public house, and found the

Doctor sitting at a table with a glass of water.The young man seemed agitated, more due to stress than the effects of his

earlier pints of beer, and he brandished a piece of paper in his hand.

`What's wrong, Henry?' the Doctor asked, motioning Haggard to sit down.

Haggard took a breath. "The Special Commissioner has drafted a memorandum,' he said, 'which he has asked me

to take to President Burgers's official residence as a matter of urgency'

The Doctor's eyes widened. 'He's going to annex after all?' he said.

Haggard shook his head. 'Rather the reverse,' he almost growled, letting his anger show. 'He's giving Burgers an

unequivocal undertaking, to the effect that the Transvaal will remain independent for at least as long as he holds the

position'

`Really?' The Doctor took the sheet of paper from his new friend, and scanned it quickly. "This is all wrong, he said under

his breath. Ambiguous, to be sure, but it really isn't the message Burgers is meant to get...'

`That's what I hoped you would say,' Haggard said."That's why I brought it here'

The two men looked at each other for a moment, over the table. The Doctor thought for a moment, while Haggard

produced another piece of paper from his pocket.This one was blank.

`Do you have a pen?' the Doctor asked, and Haggard obliged. Setting the two pieces of paper in front of him on the

table, the Doctor quickly processed the main characteristics of Shepstone's handwriting, his

manner of expression and turn of phrase, and formulated a first sentence in his mind.As Haggard looked on with

an urgent and excited expression, the Doctor put pen to paper, and began to write.

12 April 1877, 1 lam

The Doctor and Tudough stood near the front of the small crowd that had gathered in Church Square. Word had got

round over the course of the morning that the proclamation was going to be made, together with a simultaneous

protest from the state president.The Doctor had kept an eye on events throughout the night, as messages were

passed between Shepstone and Burgers well into the small hours. Nothing else had needed to be falsified, the content

and tenor of the subsequent messages being more than enough to obscure the Doctor's deception at the start. As so

often happens with arguments over really contentious topics, what was said in those subsequent missives was more

than enough to inflame the passions, such that whatever had started it going was now irrelevant. By the time the

Doctor had woken Turlough for breakfast, everything was already in place.

The time travellers watched as the seven English officials arrived in the square, among them Osborn and, to his right,

Henry Rider Hagga 16

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. The younger man coughed to gain the crowd's attention.

Ànd whereas I have been satisfied by numerous addresses, ceremonials...' Osborn started to read. His voice

was cracked; he sounded uncertain. In what might have been a gesture of absent-mindedness or defiance, he removed

his glasses. There was a ripple of uncertainty amongst the crowd, as the onlookers wondered if he would say any

more. The Doctor and 'Furlough shared a worried glance.

With a sudden, almost rough gesture, Haggard took hold of the piece of paper Osborn had been holding. In a bold,

clear voice that made for a stark contrast with Osborn, he started to read the proclamation again. And whereas I have

been satisfied by numerous addresses, ceremonials and letters that a large proportion of the inhabitants of the

Transvaal see the ruined condition of the country, and therefore earnestly desire the establishment within and

over it of Her Majesty's authority and rule ... '

The crowd cheered politely as the proclamation was read. Haggard's youthful, strident tone had sent a message, a

new boldness in the Empire's resolve: there was no doubt that these seven men, unlikely as it seemed, were taking

over the country. At the side of the square, facing the government offices, a member of Pretoria's Executive

Council read a formal protest from Thomas Burgers, urging his people to remain calm and accept the annexation.

Shepstone's announcement represented an important step forward for

the Empire's colonial ambitions. With these two quiet ceremonies in Church Square, history was taking a giant

leap forward.

...And *that* is how it *actually* happened.

Pretoria, Republic of South Africa. 27 March 2004, 1pm

`What I want to know is, what would have happened if we hadn't been there?'

Turlough reached over the table and took the bottle of dry Riesling, clearly eager to refill his glass.

They'd opted for an outside table in one of the continental-style cafés overlooking Church Square. As the sun beat

down on them, the Doctor was glad to have left his coat and jumper behind in the TARDIS. It had been some time

since he'd been able to feel this relaxed.

`The point is that we were there,' the Doctor said. 'History happened in the way it did because we were a part of it;

we were always meant to be part of it'

Turlough frowned briefly, but another sip of the wine seemed to deal with his concernÌt's just not how I thought

it was supposed to work,' he said with a shrug.

`Well, these things always look a little mysterious close-up,' the Doctor said. 'It's only from a distance that it all

starts to make sense' He looked out at the cosmopolitan bustle of the square, the students, the tourists, the diversity of

ages, ethnicities, nationalities. 'At this point in history, for instance, South Africa is a fledgling democracy. President

Mandela was freed not long after your time, took over as president in democratic elections, and oversaw the

drafting of a remarkably progressive constitution. It's a country with problems, to be sure...' He took a sip of his

lemonade. 'But it's had a remarkable journey, and achieved an awful lot. British colonialism, apartheid, slavery -

every mistake and indignity it's suffered throughout history has contributed to its character, here and now.'

'Turlough smiled:The Doctor wasn't a hundred per cent sure he'd even been listening.

Ànd what if we had been there, but we hadn't decided to help the annexation?' he said.

Aha: It was the Doctor's turn to smile, albeit a little weakly. He mulled the question over in his mind, searching

for the right words to try to explain the position to Turlough. In the end, he decided on something simpler.

`You make it sound as if we had a choice; he said.

Part Two

Pretoria, Transvaal. 10 April 1877, 2pm

Sir Theopilus Shepstone sat back in his chair, steepling his fingers and taking a moment to think about the

question that had just been put to him. He was trying to conceal the fact that his two visitors, the new

commissioner from Natal and his wife, had rather put him on the defensive since they had arrived -

unannounced, mind you - in his office just under an hour ago.

Strangely, Shepstone felt that if it had just been a matter of discussing political matters with the commissioner, he

would not have been so discomfited. Sir Joseph was a relatively

young man, and though there was a certain well-

spoken resolve about his objections to annexation, it was nothing Shepstone could not have refuted with a few well-

chosen facts. No, it was the fierce, emotive energy of Joseph's wife that had made Shepstone nervous: so far as he

knew, this was a woman with no political position of her own, at least for the present; and yet her command of the

tactical realities of the Transvaal was virtually second to none. There was also, undoubtedly, some added discomfiture

from the fact that her very lntelligence, body language and poise lent her a particularly elegant beauty - and that

he had yet to discover her name.

Ì have no doubt there will be opposition,' he said at last, responding to her question. 'What I hope and believe is

that it will be peaceful. My proposal is to engage each and every member of the Executive Council, on a generous

salary, and to ensure President Burgers is in a position to encourage cooperation.'

Sir Joseph cut in again. It was the first thing he had said for at least ten minutes. 'Won't you be breaking the terms of

Britain's treaty?' he said.

The Sand River Convention,' his wife seemed to correct him.

`London has already made it clear that she does not consider herself bound by it,' Shepstone said:The prime minister

would not have given me permission to annex otherwise? Even as he said it though, Shepstone knew he was

convincing neither his visitors nor himself what Disraeli had given him was *carte blanche* to go ahead with an

act that unequivocally broke the government's promise. No amount of political bluster was going to hide that fact.

We just want you to think about the risk you'd be taking,' the commissioner's wife said. She looked him

straight in the eye; he felt a strong temptation to look away. 'Not just for the British representatives here, but for the

Transvaal, and the Empire. What you've got here at the moment is a country in need of help, not control. If you take

hold of it, you don't know how far the consequences might spread:

`Pretoria won't survive on her own,' Shepstone started to counter. But she interrupted him.

Ìt needs more money' she said. 'But the threat from the Zulus is grossly exaggerated, and you know it.

She sat back in her chair. She seemed to realise she had won the argument.

There was a long pause before Shepstone said anything else. 'Let me think about it, he said.

They walked in silence from Shepstone's office, but he was smiling at her the whole time. It was only when they

emerged on to the street that he felt he could drop the act, and finally come out of character.

`That was magnificent, Barbara,' he told her.

She blushed`Well thank you, she said. Her face lit up with excitement. Òh, Ian, I really think we've done it,' she

enthused. Did you see how his reactions changed? I really can't see him deciding to go ahead with the annexation

now...'

`Certainly not tomorrow; Ian agreed. 'Or any time soon, for that matter:

They started walking back towards the square:And that's the point, she told him, 'the timing of the thing. You've no

idea how much the fact that Pretoria was taken so quickly and

easily affected colonisation. This way, I don't think

Britain will be so eager to send in its troops anywhere else.

ti **He tried not to let his doubts show: for now, it was enough that they had achieved something together. As they passed**

what would become the supreme court buildings, he allowed himself some speculation about the course of the

Mandela trial. When they had left London in 1963, it had been a grim certainty that he would be convicted, and

imprisoned indefinitely. But after this afternoon, neither of them knew what they would find when they got back.

'I suppose even if the other European powers step in; he ventured, `there won't be quite the same level of control

over Africa. Independence might come more quickly; apartheid might not get a chance to take hold...'

She nodded. 'I'm sure there will still be colonies; there'll still be repression. I don't know, of course: there could

even still be apartheid, she said. But I'll be happier if I can just know, at least, that it's not our country that's

responsible.'

He took her hand as he walked towards the squareÀnd another thing: this just puts paid to the Doctor's theory,

doesn't it? That it's impossible to change history...'

They stopped for a moment. She squeezed his hand, and looked him straight in the eyes`Not a word to the

Doctor,' she said.

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Neither of them had meant to leave London, 1963 in the first place, of course. They'd only found themselves aboard the

Ship because they'd given in to their curiosity, and because the Doctor hadn't trusted them to keep its existence to

themselves. But now that they were on board, Ian couldn't deny that the experience of travelling literally anywhere in

space and time was nothing short of exhilarating. Though there was no doubt that he and Barbara would gratefully

return home just as soon as the Doctor found their way back there, equally he could not imagine doing so without at least a

tinge of regret.

There was an element of their adventures that still bothered him, however, and after a few occasions where it had

reared its head, he was more than sure it bothered Barbara even more. Somehow, it seemed the Doctor was able to lay

down the rules about whether they could interfere in history, whether that was something so trivial as leaving a piece of

anachronistic clothing or jewellery behind, or something as important as saving'a man's life. He'd explained more than once

that it was a matter of keeping history intact, as if the immutable laws of cause and effect were

a. themselves to themselves. And that would make sense, except that somehow vulnerable to the foibles of four

travellers who couldn't keep

wherever the Doctor himself was concerned, there were so many occasions on which he would be the one interfering,

poking his nose in where it wasn't wanted, delving into this thing or that almost as if he were looking for trouble. The logical

conclusion of what the Doctor had told them, Ian reasoned, was that they should stay very much on the sidelines of events,

purely as observers, if indeed they ever travelled at all. And yet the old man showed that he didn't practise what he

preached, almost literally every time he ventured out of his ship.

On some level, Ian had known, when their adventure in Natal had ended with the Doctor contracting a fever, and Vicki

had offered to stay behind and tend to him while he and Barbara explored a little more, that this was an opportunity to test

the waters. Barbara had said, almost as soon as they'd landed in the province, that here was where Britain's role in Africa

had really taken off. When the Doctor was out of earshot, she'd added - a little too urgently, perhaps - that if only the

Transvaal hadn't become part of the Empire, then things might have turned out very differently.The struggle against

apartheid, all the injustice, all the lives lost, the international repercussions of Britain's African 'adventure', might never

have had to occur. And with the Doctor confined to the Ship and none the wiser, here - finally - was their chance to do

some good.

If the Doctor had been there, perhaps, or if he'd been clearer about the rules he and the teachers were meant to follow, Ian

liked to think he would have put up a spirited defence of non-interference. It did make sense, after all: neither of them

knew what effect their actions might have,

for good or ill. But wasn't that just the sort of decision a person had to make in life, when a major decision came

along? If the Doctor was right, he reasoned, there would be some force of nature, a cosmic short circuit perhaps, that

would stop them making a significant change to history there would be no harm done. But if he wasn't, and it

really was possible for two people who knew the effects of annexation to stop it in its tracks - well, he wasn't

about to deny Barbara the chance to give it a try.

In retrospect, perhaps he should have told her that he suspected something would go wrong - that for the

laws of cause and effect to work, there simply had to be some spanner that would lodge itself in the works. But when

they'd left Shepstone's office, he had genuinely believed that they'd done it. His thoughts that evening hadn't been

about what might go wrong, or what might reverse the effect they'd had; rather, he'd been thinking about the effects

themselves, dreaming - with what turned out to be false pride, on behalf of them both - about their roles as the

saviours of Africa.

He'd been a fool, no doubt, for going along with the idea. He might even, one day, tell the Doctor about it - let

him know that he knew, now, that there were some things they couldn't change. But just imagining the triumphal,

chastising tone the old man would adopt made him think again. No matter what the end result, he wasn't sorry

for joining Barbara in the attempt, for trying to use their special position in the universe to do some good, to

achieve something they believed was right. No, for that day's work, he thought, he wouldn't be sorry even for a

moment.

12 April 1877, 11am

They stood at the back of the small crowd that had gathered in Church Square. Word had got round over the

course of the morning that the proclamation was going to be made, together with a simultaneous protest from the

state president. Barbara's first reaction had been panicked, but as it became clearer that the annexation was in fact

going to happen, it had given way to resignation. At least, she told him, they'd stayed for long enough to fmd out

what had happened. She would have hated to leave thinking they'd won, and only found out later that they hadn't.

It was a small consolation, though. He'd never seen her looking so sad.

The time travellers watched as the seven English officials arrived in the square. She told him that the old man in the

middle of the group 170

was Melmeth Osbo17

r 1n, Secretary to the Mission, and the man next to him was Rider Haggard. Ian

smiled a little at that, remembering how much he'd enjoyed reading his novels back at school. At this point in

history, of course, he knew nothing about his future career; how he'd be remembered.The young man

coughed to gain the crowd's attention.

Ànd whereas I have been satisfied by numerous addresses, ceremonials...' Osborn started to read. His

voice was cracked; he sounded uncertain. He removed his glasses. There was a ripple of uncertainty amongst the

crowd, as the onlookers wondered if he would say any more.

t For a few seconds Ian dared to hope he might not read the rest.

With a sudden, almost rough gesture, Haggard then took hold of the piece of paper, and started to read the

proclamation again. And whereas I have been satisfied by numerous addresses, ceremonials and letters that a large

proportion of the inhabitants of the Transvaal see the ruined condition of the country, and therefore earnestly

desire the establishment within and over it of Her Majesty's authority and rule...'

The rest of the crowd cheered politely. They were dimly aware of another assembly just off the square, which

the travellers knew would make the annexation safe. History,

despite their best efforts, was taking a giant leap

forward.

`Come on,' he urged her. 'Let's get back to the Doctor; see how he's doing.'

Her eyes were wet with tears. Ì almost hope the fever's killed him,' she snapped harshly.

He raised his eyebrows.

`Well, he's right, isn't he; she sniffed. 'The silly old goat. He's right, we can't change history, we can't affect

anything, it all just puts itself right back to where we started. No matter what we do, no matter where we go, we're

never going to achieve anything at all'

He put his arm around her, as she gave in to her tears. 'I know,' he said. 'I didn't want him to be right either.

I suppose we just needed to learn that lesson for ourselves'

They stood there together for a few minutes, until she had stopped crying.

It took just over half an hour for them to walk back to the TARDIS, during which neither of them said a word. When

they got back, Vicki didn't even ask where and when they were, still less what they'd been doing; it seemed

she'd actually enjoyed looking after the old man for the last few days.

Thankfully, the Doctor's fever had subsided almost completely. It was only a few hours before he felt well

enough to operate the controls, and they eagerly accepted his offer to take them somewhere else. They left

Pretoria without giving it so much as another glance.

For its part, Pretoria continued on its course without them, its history back on track. For all intents and

purposes, it was almost as if they had never been there at all.

Of The Mermaid and Jupiter

Ian Mond is Danny Heap

16 October 1829

`Still not 'ere, Captain?' Peter Richley asked.

`No, grumbled Captain Samuel Nolbrow.And we are getting later by the minute'

Both men were standing near the *Mermaids* gangway. Behind them, the two-mast schooner gleamed in the afternoon

sun.The cargo bound for Collier had been stowed the day before and the crew were now milling idly around the teak-

wood deck. Some were smoking, others were playing cards and a few were sharing bawdy jokes they'd heard at the local

public house.

The captain was also painfully aware that the annoying academic from Sydney was likely pacing his cabin, impatient for

the ship to set sail.

Àye, but the money's good,' said Peter. He was a fine sailor, hard-working and honest. But he had yet to realise that

sometimes money was not the most important thing.

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Òh, yes, he could have purchased his own vessel for the amount he's paying. But a man has his reputation and I do

not like to be delayed'

`My good Captain, it would take more than the delay of a single day to ruin a reputation as fine as yours' Nolbrow

had no idea from where the llttle man had appeared, but there he

was, engulfed in a large brown coat and clutching a

red-handled umbrella.

The captain made a point of not batting an eyelid. 'Even a good reputation can be sullied by tardiness,

Doctor.You said you would be here at twelve'

Ì would have been, but my assistant slowed me down'

At the other end of the dock Nolbrow could see a figure dragging a large case. The person was shouting the foulest

insults and the captain was relieved there were no ladies present.

Then to his horror, he realised the approaching figure *was* a woman. A woman whose stylish red and blue dress was at

odds with her boyish figure, unusually short hair and awful, awful language.

`Peter,' Nolbrow said, barely concealing his embarrassment. 'Help the young lady with her case'

`Yes,sir: Peter ran over to the struggling woman, who seemed glad for the assistance.

`Well, Doctor, if you would kindly board we shall be away.' With

practised ease, Nolbrow turned to his crew. 'Look alive, you men. We set sail within the quarter hour. Hussey!

Matthews! Prepare to cast off the lines.'

'I thought we were going to Soolis,' Benny whispered in the Doctor's ear as the *Mermaid* sailed out from Sydney

Harbour. For her, as with many tourists, ancient Sydney evoked images of opera houses and harbour bridges

and stage shows on the rocks.To her disappointment, the Sydney where they'd spent the last week had been little

more than cramped, dirty streets filled with horse manure and effluent. Oh, to be on an archaeological

dig! At least that was dirt and crap with a purpose!

The Doctor was looking out across the Tasman Sea sporting one of those strange little smiles that infuriated

the hell out of Benny. `Soolis can wait for the moment. I thought we could do with a relaxing ocean cruise.

`You don't honestly expect me to believe you.'

`Why wouldn't you?'

Benny laughed so hard she almost fell overboard.

19 October 1829

Very little happened on the first three days out from Sydney. The *Mermaid* had made up some of the time it

had lost, and was now sailing around the Barrier Reef along the Queensland coast.

Not that Benny was even remotely interested. She supposed that, as an archaeologist with a love for history, she

should be revelling in the small details of sealife. She'd travelled this far back in Earth's history before, but never on

an old sailing ship with its smells of tar and brine and sweat. But all she could think about was when it would

happen. When the world would collapse inward and whatever evil the Doctor was presently hunting down

would show its face in a pyrotechnic display of death and mayhem.

And something else had been bothering Benny. The crew - eighteen men in all - didn't seem in the least taken

with her. Here she was, the only woman on board, and she'd so far experienced no whistles, no rude innuendos,

no wink-winks or nudge-nudges. They seemed more concerned with checking the rigging, or polishing the

decks, or making sure the cargo hadn't been eaten by rats.

Even the Doctor seemed more interested in his fob watch, than dealing with her insecurities.

`There are three things you need to be aware of,' he said glancing out at the ocean. 'First, once the captain

realised there would be a woman on board, he spoke to the crew and told them to behave themselves. Not a single

one of these men would dare go against Nolbrow's orders. Second,

desirable body-types change and at this time men prefer their women a little more Rubenesque.And third, most men

don't like to be out-drunk by a woman:

`But it was only a little bet,' Benny protested. The night before, wandering the decks in boredom, she'd found

some of the guys drinking and invited herself in. They hadn't taken her seriously until she'd beaten crewman Matthews in a

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'who will vomit first' contest.

'At least he made it to the railings,' the Doctor said.

Benny grimaced. At least he didn't have to sleep in his'

20 October 1829

By the afternoon of the fourth day the *Mermaid* had reached the Torres Strait. The heat was oppressive and the sails

had hung limp since dawn. Benny longed to strip down to her togs, but realised this would only be asking'for trouble.

She decided instead to search for the Doctor. Despite the close confines of the schooner, he had managed to avoid her all

day.

She found him at the bow of the ship, in conversation with Professor Burroughs and Captain Nolbrow.The professor was

an effete man with an enormous nose and large, watery eyes. Benny wasn't surprised to see he was once again arguing

with the Doctor, waggling his forger in the Time Lord's face.The Doctor was taking it in his stride, responding with entirely

the sort of things to cause the academic maximum annoyance. This was how it had been from the moment the Doctor

and Burroughs had met. Controversial comments parried by waggling fingers. Burroughs had been particularly incensed

when in response to asking whether the Doctor were a God-fearing man, the Time Lord had responded,'No, when

you've met one, you've met them all:

You had to hand it to the Doctor, he really knew how to piss off authority figures.

Rather than become involved in the argument, Benny elected to simply stand on the sidelines and enjoy the spectacle.

Ìf we had left on time, we would not be in this intolerable situation,' Burroughs was saying.

The Doctor smiled. 'I think it was Walt Whitman who wrote, *Enchantress of the stormy seas, Priestess of

Night's high mysteries".' `What are you blathering about?'

'I'm glad Walt isn't here to hear you call his poetry blather. He never was good with critics:

`Who is this Walt!'

Ah, yes, *he* will have only just turned ten... '

Benny sighed.

`What is the relevance?' Burroughs had gone beyond mere finger

waggling and was now gesticulating with both his hands. 'We are caught in the Torres Strait. You may not be

aware of this Doctor, but as I'm sure the captain will confirm this is an -'

- extremely treacherous stretch of water: finished the Doctor, raising his voice slightly. `Yes, I can read maps as

well, and I've heard the stories. Ships have a habit of sinking in this region.'

`You say it as though it were a point of interest. As I have explained, my expertise is desperately needed in Collier.

My work with the indigenes -'

`You mean your indoctrination.' The Doctor's smile was more of a grimace. Benny knew that very soon the Time

Lord was going to become dangerous.

As if sensing the same thing, Nolbrow stepped between the two men. `Professor, this ship is becalmed. It could

have happened yesterday, it could have happened tomorrow. I've been sailing all my life and the one thing I know

with certainty is that we are always at the mercy of the elements:

Nolbrow was staring into the distance. Benny followed his gaze and saw a dark line of clouds massing across the

horizon.

The storm hit at midnight.

Waves the size of small buildings smashed into the *Mermaid,* sweeping the men's legs from beneath them.The

wind howled through the rigging and shredded the sails before they could be dropped. Benny was amazed no one

was thrown overboard during nature's opening salvo.

Nolbrow ordered the Doctor, Benny and the professor below deck.The Doctor refused to follow instructions; he

seemed only too eager to get his hands dirty and his clothes sopping wet. Benny also wanted to help But the

Doctor suggested she might be of greater use keeping Burroughs out of the way.

Burroughs himself was only too happy to follow Benny into a warm, dry cabin.

`The storm will pass, my dear girl! He forced a smile even though Benny could see him shaking

Ì'm quite fine, Pr 17

of6essor'

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`But you must be scared out of your wits.'

`No, I find it all rather fascinating. It's not every day one faces certain death.'

`Certain death' When the Professor next spoke there was a definite tremble in his voice. Ì'm not sure we're

going to die. Maybe the odd scrape and bruise... at worst, the odd cut. But death... oh, I doubt we... we need to

fear the reaper:

`But the crewmen seem quite convinced we are going to be ripped apart' In the darkness it was easy for

Benny to hide her smile She

wondered how far she could push the professor before he had a total nervous breakdown. Though I'm not

scared of death. I've always wanted to meet the Goddess.'

'The... the Goddess?' Burroughs stood, unsteady on his feet. Benny would lay money it was more from terror

than the *Mermaids* tossing and turning.

Then the Doctor stormed into the cabin. 'We're being pushed towards the rocks. We need to abandon the ship.

Now!'

Benny rose and extended an open palm to the professor. He met her eye and she could see his fear as he took

her hand.

'Goddess, here we come,' Benny whispered.

The professor moaned.

Despite the efforts of her crew, the *Mermaid* couldn't be saved. Two hours after the storm hit, the schooner

crashed into a coral reef that rlpped her hull wide open.

Knowing all was lost, Captain Nolbrow bellowed, 'Abandon ship!' The men were quick to obey. As Peter Richley

ran past, the captain took hold of his arm`Richley, make sure Miss Summerfield reaches the rocks safely.'

'Yes, sir.'

Lips pursed, Nolbrow watched his men leap overboard. He wasn't afraid of dying himself, but he couldn't bear the

thought of any of his men being hurt. And he was certain some of them would be killed. The storm still

raged, the wind still howled and the rocks and coral were sharp.

'Captain, we must leave: The Doctor was standing beside Nolbrow, wearing his large brown coat and holding

his red-handled umbrella, looking just as he had when he boarded.

'I will not leave until everyone in my care is safely off the *Mermaid.'* 'Well, of course, you do have a reputation

to uphold:

Nolbrow turned to the Doctor and did the strangest thing. He burst into laughter.

The Doctor smiled. 'Captain, we're the last' He hooked the handle of his Umbrella into the waistband of

Nolbrow's trousers and pulled him towards the railings`Come on, we go together.'

Still laughing, Nolbrow followed the Doctor into the dark and churning ocean.

23 October 1829

1 Benny shielded her eyes as she stared at the horizon. She wasn't sure if I she was imagining it, but something

seemed to be moving there.

Everyone had survived the wreck of the *Mermaid.Their* new home was

llttle more than a large rock sticking out of the coral reef. With no

protection from the elements, Benny and the men found themselves alternately soaked by water, chilled by

wind and burnt by the sun. Her only surviving dress was falling apart, and worst of all, the party's only food

consisted of seaweed and small unidentifiable fish.

Benny loathed fish.

The Doctor provided the only distractions. With a twinkle in his eye, he pranced about the men relating the

most outlandish -stories and performing the most improbable magic tricks. Even Professor Burroughs found

time to smile

At one point, the Doctor, Captain Nolbrow and three crewmen started singing sea-shanties. Benny had no idea

there were so many verses to *What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor?*

Now, as Benny realised the speck she'd been watching on the horizon was in fact a ship, she wondered whether

they must have been lured by the same crooning racket that had driven the seagulls off.

Nolbrow was certain the *Swiftsure* was a good vessel, but being on board the three-mast barque only reminded

him of his own ship lying in pieces at the bottom of the ocean.

Captain Fredrick McIntyre seemed a nice enough chap, though he had the ruddy cheeks and red veined nose of

a man who enjoyed his rum a little too much. Nolbrow offered McIntyre the assistance of himself and his men,

feeling it would be the least they could do under the circumstances. But McIntyre seemed quite happy for

the crew of the *Mermaid* to simply relax and enjoy the rest of the journey.

During his many quiet moments on the *Swiftsure,* Nolbrow thought about the money the Doctor had paid

him.As an honest businessman and a Christian, he felt uncomfortable keeping such a large sum after failing to

complete the journey.

But when he finally cornered the Doctor below decks and broached the issue with him, the little man was adamant

that Nolbrow should keep the payment in full.

Ì haven't had so much fun in ages' The Doctor smiled. 'Besides, I feel somewhat responsible for the loss of your

ship. If we had left on time we might have avoided the storm.'

27 October 1829

As she looked up at the stars from her vantage point on the aft deck, Benny realised she was actually beginning

to enjoy herself.

She had traded what was left of her torn and stinking dress for a warm pullover and a pair of loose fitting

trousers. Best of all Benny had overheard some of the men talking about her. Harold Hussey and Peter

Richley had regaled the *Swtftsure's* crew with tales of her drinking prowess and now, whenever she walked past

the men, she'd notice eyes tracking her… and parts of her body in particular.Whatever their cultural mores and

personal tastes, men throughout all of history were still men. Thank Goddess for that.

The Doctor had been surprisingly absent all day. Benny had become used to the Time Lord capering around

the boat, entertaining the crew with stories and the sort of useless trivia that only children and grown men

found fascinating. Everywhere she turned, there was the Doctor. It were as if ten of him were running around the

ship, making sure no one missed out on the bizarre party going on in his head.

And now he had vanished. Typical.

Benny yawned, wishing it wasn't so late. The night sky was incredibly dear and the stars sparkled and glittered

with no knowledge of how they would one day become all but obscured by pollution. Still picking out familiar

constellations, Benny strolled reluctantly towards her cabin.

Suddenly her foot slipped and she found herself sprawled across the deck.

It was then she noticed the footprint.

No, strike that, wet footprints on the otherwise dry, wooden deck.

Leading from the port side, down along the deck, and into the crew's quarters. Someone, or something, had

slipped out of the night and stolen aboard the ship

Well, it *had* been a relaxing ocean cruise.

28 October 1829

`Doctor, what is going on?'

`We're about to hit those rocks.'

`Not rocks again!'

`We must be caught in an uncharted current. Benny, I need you to run down to the cargo hold. Half the

***Mermaid's* crew is sleeping off a heavy night of rum in there and you'll have to raise the alarm'**

Ì wish I was sleeping off a heavy night of rum. Doctor, I found footprints last night. I think someone

came aboard the *Swiftsure:* `Benny, we don't have time for this:

`But it might have something to do with the fact that we're about to be split open again by another bunch of

unfriendly-looking r 17

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cks'

`Benny! Do as I say, people's lives are at stake'

`We're going to sink again, aren't we?'

`Yes, and it's up to you and I to make sure that everyone comes out of this in one piece'

Later that day

This rocky outcrop was much more pleasant than the last one, but Benny didn't even have time to put up

curtains. Only five hours after the *Swiftsure* sank, a schooner that looked like a bigger version of the

***Mermaid* crested the horizon. The men shouted, the men screamed, the men yelled for help.**

And the *Governor Ready* heard them.

Two ships had sunk, and not a single life had been lost.

The Doctor, however, didn't seem all that pleased. He kept on

glancing at his fob watch.

Two hours later

The sun *was* setting in a glorious blaze of orange, red and yellow. Most of the men seemed mesmerised by the

sight, as if they'd never seen the sunset before. It was possible that quite a few of them were praying to God,

thanking Him for keeping them alive after one or two close calls.

Benny wasn't watching the sunset.

She had just noticed the Doctor sneaking down into the *Governor Ready's* cargo hold.

Half an hour later

Twilight. The schooner was incredibly overcrowded and the men were trying to figure out sleeping arrangements.

Benny didn't give a hoot about where she slept.

She had just noticed the Doctor sneaking *out* of the *Governor Ready's* cargo hold.

Thirty seconds later

`What are you up to?'

`What do you mean?' It wasn't often that Benny caught the Doctor off guard, but he was so wound up in his

own little machinations that he seemed genuinely surprised to see her

`Don't play innocent, you're up to something:

`Well... maybe I am... but let's not discuss it here:

At that moment Benny noticed the first wisp of smoke curl up from the *Governor Ready's* cargo hold.

`You little git!' Furious, Benny clawed back the urge to throttle the Doctor 'Are you going to explain any of

this to me?'

Èxplanations later.' Taking her by the arm, the Doctor tried

unsuccessfully to drag her away. 'We don't want to be found here when the fire takes hold:

`You're sinking the ships!'

`Yes, I'm sinking the ships:

Ànd you decided on this new career choice, when?'

`Benny' The Doctor performed one of his very best growls. `Not now'

From behind them came a muffled roaring sound. Benny didn't need to turn around to know the fire had taken, but

she couldn't help herself From the bowels of the ship she could see the first signs of flickering, angry flame.

Only now did she allow the Doctor to move her away from the blaze. Àll right, but later you'd better tell me what's

going on:

`Yes, Benny'

And this is the last time I'm going to be dropped in the drink, right?' `Yes, Benny?

The ship had burnt to the water line in under an hour.

People should have been killed in the mad, crowded rush to the boats. Yet somehow, with the help of the Doctor,

Benny and the calming influences of the three captains, everyone survived the fire. The only casualty was Professor

Burroughs who, in a blind panic, ran straight into a door and knocked himself insensible. And who, as he was carried

on board one of the longboats, could be heard muttering, Not again, not again.'

The *Mermaid's* crew took the sinking with a dash of black humour.As Peter Richley was yet again helping Benny off

the blazing ship, he smiled and said, `Me Mam never wanted me to be a sailor, she was always worried I'd sink Aye, well

I've sunk three times and I'm doing fine so far.'

29 October 1829

Dawn had just broken and Benny was trying her best to get some sleep. The little jolly boat was jammed full of smelly

sailors, and every time she dosed her eyes, a knee, an elbow or possibly something worse would poke into her, jerking

her awake.After being jabbed for the third time by what she hoped was only Crewman Matthew's knee, Benny gave up

on the idea of sleep altogether.

The first rays of sunlight dappled and streaked the ocean. There was very little sound from the *Governor Ready's*

longboats or the skiff; the odd murmur, a snatch of laughter. For a moment, Benny could forget how cold and wet and

altogether horrible she felt and just enjoy this one peaceful moment.

Then she noticed the Doctor. He'd made it into the jolly boat with her

and was now sitting between two very large men, red-handled umbrella resting on his lap. He was fiddling

with something - no several somethings - and was doing it in such an obvious way, that not a single man paid

any attention.

Benny wondered what his plan was. What possible reason could he have to sink three ships? Now that she

knew he was involved she realised he'd manipulated events from the very beginning. It was the Doctor who had

delayed the *Mermaid* for a day - long enough so it could travel directly into a massive storm. It was the

Doctor's footprints she'd seen that night on the deck of the *Swijtsure.* Benny wasn't entirely sure how, but he had

somehow contrived it so that the barque would be split open by the rocks. And of course it was the Doctor who set

up the incendiary devices in the hold of the *Governor Ready.*

The Doctor pocketed the small somethings he'd been working on and quickly checked his fob watch. He tapped a

forefinger against his chin and Benny noticed the keen way his eyes searched out a particular spot on the horizon.

What are you up to now, you smarmy little git?

And for the briefest moment, across the mass of snoring, whispering, grunting men, their eyes met. Benny could

see how his pale, grey eyes glittered and danced and she knew without a shadow of doubt that he had lied to

her.Whether she liked it or not, he *was* going to throw her and the rest of the crew straight back into the drink.

30 October 1829

As morning broke, the three crews were rescued by the Australian Government cutter, the *Comet,* under the

captaincy of Theodore Fraser. The captain was an older man and, like many of his generation, rather

unsophisticated. He took no pains to hide his displeasure at taking the shipwrecked crews aboard, especially after

he'd heard their stories.

Nolbrow was fully aware that those who sailed the seas were a superstitious lot. He himself; in an effort to

placate his crew, avoided any task that might be construed as being unlucky. He made sure never to set sail on a

Friday, and always boarded the ship with his right foot first. So when John Scott, the captain of the *Governor*

***Ready,* started spreading rumours that the *Mermaid's* crew were jinxed, Nolbrow was offended. More than that,**

he was worried.

Captain Scott was a quiet, mousy sort of man, someone who seemed ill-suited to sea life. Nolbrow realised Scott was

finding it hard to rationalise the sudden loss of his schooner In his mind, the only explanation was that the crew of

the *Mermaid* were cursed.The captain of the *Comet* took this to heart and ordered his men to keep well away from

the *Mermaid's* crew.

But with over one hundred men on board, it was bard for Nolbrow's crew to keep themselves segregated. At

one point he had overheard a sailor from the *Comet* arguing with Peter Richley. 'How can you call any of us

unlucky,' Peter had said. We've been on three ships that have sunk and not a man lost:

Nolbrow had cringed when he'd heard that. Reminding others of how many ships lay at the bottom of the sea

would only cause the rumours, the whispers and the fear to spread. Nolbrow could feel the tension grow. There

were too many men on board and not enough discipline. Matters could all too easily spiral out of control.

2 November 1829

As relations grew strained on board the *Comet,* the Doctor pulled Benny aside to *ask* that she not involve herself in

any fights.

Ì'm net Ace,' she said, feeling a little put out by his sudden paternalistic concern. 'I'm more likely to say something

witty and charming first, *then* punch someone in the face.'

The Doctor ignored her, his face falling into shadow Ì need you to do something for me:

Benny raised a hand. 'Okay_ this is what I was waiting for. I an not doing anything for you until you tell me

why you're sinking these ships. Never mind all the nice dresses I've lost, do you realise how much hate, anger and

general irritation you've caused these men? And then there's poor Professor Burroughs, who I'm certain is well

and truly past the point of a nervous breakdown. What's it all for Doctor?'

She expected an argument. She expected him to brush away her remarks and threaten to play the spoons.

She expected him to go all dark and nasty, his eyes changing from compassionate pale grey to dangerous autumn

green.

But instead he told her the truth.

Knowing the integrity of the Web of Time itself would depend upon her actions didn't make Benny feel any better

about helping the Doctor sink the *Comet.* The Time Lord handed her a syringe, filled with a fluorescent yellow

substance. A little concoction of his own which was designed to break down the molecular structure of wood - in

essence, a fast acting version of dry rot.

`Tomorrow the *Comet* will sail straight into a storm -'

Ànother one!'

Ìt's nothing to do with me. Believe it or not, I can't control the weather. But I do have the advantage of knowing

when the weather will occur.The *Comet,* unlike the *Mermaid,* is strong enough to survive the storm.'

`So we need to weaken the hull so the ship will sink?'

Precisely, but not too much, the ship needs to stay afloat for a day or so. Just a drop here and a drop there. Oh, and

make sure you do the mast first.' And why can't you do this?'

Às you've well noticed, the tensions on this vessel are rising. I need to make sure that people aren't hurt:

And without another word the Doctor had left, leaving Benny with the syringe.

3 *November 1829*

Mid-afternoon, and within twenty minutes of the storm hitting the main mast had snapped, taking the sails with

it

The reaction from the *Comet's* crew was instantaneous. Although the ship was floundering, Fraser's men were

more interested in starting fights with the sailors from the *Mermaid,* the *Swiftsure* and the *Governor Ready*

than trying to save the vessel from disaster.

Nolbrow and McIntyre did their best to rally the men, despite the constant eruption of fist-fights and

arguments. The Doctor proved an invaluable mediator, breaking up fights between massive sailors by either pushing

the combatants aside, or looking them in the eye and whispering words that made them go pale.

When, at last, Fraser gave the order to abandon ship on the only serviceable longboat, he ordered that the

other 'damned crews' be left to their own fate. Captain Scott

pleaded for himself and his men to be saved, but

Fraser ignored him.

`He can't leave us here!' Scott had shouted to Nolbrow.

`What do you expect, Captain Scott, when you yourself persuaded him that we are cursed: Nolbrow's voice was grim as

he fixed the smaller man with a steely gaze. 'You've been mixing with the damned. In his eyes you're as tainted

as we are'

The storm was sharp184

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, brutal and short.

Fraser and his crew had rowed to safety, leaving everyone else to survive on the wreckage of the *Comet.*

Benny found herself clutching onto a large chunk of debris that had once formed part of the hull. Bobbing on

either side of her in the mercifully warm water were Hussey and Burroughs.The professor was proving to be a real

handful, alternating between wailing for help and praying to God.

It was while Benny was trying yet again to calm him that she noticed the grey fm slicing through the water

some way off. Seconds later, she noted three more.They were circling closer, skirting the wreckage as their owners

sized up the situation.

For the first time since she'd boarded the *Mermaid* over two weeks ago, Benny felt genuine fear. Unlike rowdy

crews, sinking boats and fist-fights, sharks were no fun at all. *Oh Goddess... can this get any worse?*

'Sharks!' screeched Burroughs and started to cry.

Hussey screamed at the professor to shut up. The part of Benny which had had just about enough of ships,

storms and seawater, hoped Burroughs would let go of the hull and drown. But mostly she felt sorry for the

poor, pathetic academic.

The Doctor had been moving from one piece of flotsam to the other, keeping everyone calm and trying to

entertain them with the odd joke and story.The moment he heard the commotion, he dog-paddled straight over to

Benny and the others, his umbrella trailing behind him.

Ì count six sharks,' he muttered, bobbing in the water. And then louder so everyone could hear: 'Please! Try

not to move - they're attracted to movement:

Burroughs continued to scream and thrash around. Hussey had swum

over to the professor and was trying desperately to hold the man still. 'Should I hit him very hard, Doctor?'

Benny said through gritted teeth. Ì thought you said you weren't like Ace:

'I'm seeing the advantages in some of her idiosyncrasies:

The Doctor smiled. 'No need for violence.' Still bobbing, he asked Hussey to let go of the professor and then

grabbed Burroughs's head, forcing him to make eye contact. Burroughs continued to tremble, but stopped

screaming.

"There's nothing to panic about: The Doctor's voice was soft and soothing, like a half-remembered

childhood melody. 'You've been introduced to a new concept, the pool party. You're enjoying yourself

enormously, relaxing in the water with the other academics on a

gorgeous summer day in Oxford:

'Oh... it is quite gorgeous; grinned Burroughs. 'And what lovely water.' Beside the professor, Hussey started

giggling like a little boy. 'The water ls just... smashing!'

Burroughs splashed Hussey in the face and both men laughed. 'Goddess? Benny groaned.

`Gentlemen, please,' admonished the Doctor. 'I would think that two such distinguished men would resist the

urge to splash about like a pair of schoolboys.'

While the professor and Hussey enjoyed their delightful pool party in a more sedate manner, Benny questioned

the Doctor about the shark problem.

Èasily solved' He pulled a metallic device from the submerged pocket of his trousers. Dripping with water, it

looked like someone had taken a small metal umbrella and attached it to a torch. "This little innovation of

mine emits a short sonic pulse.As long as no one is bleeding or thrashing around, this should keep them at bay.'

And how long are we going to be stuck here?'

Òh, 14 hours and 31 minutes, give or take the odd second.'

14 hours and 32 minutes later, the passenger ship *Jupiter* hove into view.

4 November 1829

It was early morning and Benny was wet, cold and hungry. She now understood how a drowned rat might feel

and never, ever, wanted to see the ocean again. The good news was that the Doctor's shark repellent device had

worked. Once again, everyone had survived.

Benny was chatti 186

ng to Hussey when she noticed the Doctor speaking to a member of the *Jupiter's* crew She'd

been keeping an eye on the Time Lord since they'd boarded, wondering how long they were destined to remain on

the ship before sinking it.

Suddenly, the Doctor broke away from the crewmember, his face pale. Benny excused herself and followed as he

made his way down to the passenger deck. Fleet of foot, he quickly navigated the corridors, finally ducking into one

of the rooms. Benny waited for a few moments, before creeping up to listen at the door.

She could hear the Doctor's voice clearly enough, but had to strain to make out words spoken in an older, female

voice. 'What happened?' The Doctor was saying. 'You seemed fine when I saw you last'

Òh, Doctor, I should never have come... I was too old to make this journey''The woman's voice had a thick

Yorkshire accent.

`Nonsense -'

All I wanted was to see my son again'

`Yes, I know... I know'

Benny heard the old woman begin to sob. 'Now I'll die not knowing whether he is even alive.'

Òh, no you won't' The quiet determination in the Doctor's voice was unmistakeable.

There was a hasty scuff of footsteps and before Benny could think of hiding, the door swung open. Benny.' The

Doctor spoke as if he'd always known she was there. Ì need you to find Peter Richley

`Doctor, what's -'

`No questions, there may not be time:

The Doctor was still waiting outside the room, when Benny hurried back with Peter at her side.

He greeted the confused sailor with a wide smile.

`Benny said you needed me, Peter said.

`Yes, Peter, I need you to do me a favour. There's a woman in that room who's on her deathbed and her one final

wish is to see her son.'

'I ain't sure I understand'

'Her vision is failing.You'd be about the right age!

Òh... I ain't sure 'bout this? Peter looked to Benny. She placed a comforting hand on his forearm.

'I think you should help her if you can, Peter: Benny told him.

Peter stared solemnly into her eyes:A dying woman's wish is no small thing, is it?'

`No:

Peter nodded and took a deep, deep breath before turning to the Doctor. What do I have to do?'

The Doctor explained that the women had lived in Yorkshire all her life and that her only son had travelled to

Australia over ten years ago. She hadn't seen her or heard from him sincèLike you, his name is Peter?The Doctor

paused. And her name is Sarah Richley`

Peter stiffened.

'Is there something wrong?' the Doctor asked.

'I... that name...'

'Sarah Richley`

"That's_ that's... I'm *Peter Richley*`

'Are you?'

Benny wanted to kick the Doctor in the knee.

'Aye; whispered Peter. Benny could see the sadness and guilt in his face. She knew he longed to justify his actions,

to explain why he had left his mother all those years ago.Why he hadn't sent letters.Why he hadn't told her where

he was or how much he loved her.

'We're not here to judge you, Peter,' the Doctor said`But she loves you very much and she misses her son'

Swallowing back tears, Peter drew himself up. 'Thank you,' he said and entered the room.

The Doctor and Benny stood side by side listening to the voices beyond the door 'Main... Main, it's me... it's

Petey?

'Petey... is that yo 187

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u? Oh, my... oh, my son:

Hooking his umbrella over his arm, the Doctor turned and began strolling down the corridor. Benny wasn't

going to let him get away this easily. Catching up, she stood with hands on hips, blocking his path.

'This wasn't about the Web of Time at all, was it, Doctor?'

He smiled.

'And the future of mankind was never dependent on four crucking ships sinking in the middle of the crucking

ocean, was it?'

The Doctor's smile grew just a little wider.

You lied to me.You swore you were telling the truth but you lied

to me. Again!' Now Benny really, really wanted to

kick the Doctor in the knee.

`Bernice, you wouldn't have believed me. And even if you had, I doubt you would have been as willing to help:

`You're right about that, Doctor. It's ludicrous, risking the lives of hundreds of people just to re-unite a

mother with her son. She's dying, it's not like they're going to have a lot of time to catch up. So what was the

point, other than to show off how clever you are?'

The Doctor frowned. 'Is that really how you see me?'

'Well... I...' Benny's arms fell to her sides.

`Sarah isn't dying, Benny,' the Doctor said softly 'Her road to recovery began the instant she saw her son. The

human spirit is a powerful restorative, something your species should be proud of. Sarah will end up living

another twenty years in a house that Peter builds for her from a bonus given to him by Captain Nolbrow. Her life

is just beginning.'

Benny couldn't remember the last time the Doctor had spoken with such intensity. 'So, you really had no

ulterior motive?' she asked

Ì met Sarah Richley not long ago. She was kind to me, when I needed someone to talk to. And she deeply missed

her son. I secured passage for her on the *Jupiter* and promised that she would see Peter again.'

The Doctor placed a hand on Benny's shoulder. 'I've saved planets, galaxies and even the universe on a few

occasions. Working on that scale it's very easy to forget what it's all for. That each single life has its own hopes and

dreams, and these too are worth saving:

As Benny followed the Doctor down the brightly lit corridor, a thought occurred to her. 'Where did you leave the

TARDIS?'

Ìn Sydney.'

`What!' Benny had visions of weeks stuck aboard another bloody ship. And she couldn't entirely shake the

suspicion that the Doctor might have developed a taste for sabotage.

`Don't fret, Benny, it's presently in the cargo hold. I preset the coordinates:

'So it's not damaged, then'

***Not at all:**

Òkay' Benny chewed on her lip. `So why didn't we just pick up Sarah in the TARDIS and take her straight to

Peter in the first place? I mean, you must have spent months researching weather patterns and shipping

schedules. Not to mention working out how to sink the ships or drive them off course:

The Doctor waved a dismissive hand. 'I had to think of the Web of Time. These sort of things aren't easy you

know.'

They continued walking in silence for a moment.

`This had nothing to do with the Web of Time, did it?' Benny asked. A pause.

`No'

`You didn't even *think* of picking her up in the TARDIS, did you?' A much longer pause.

`No'

`You git!'

6 *November 1829*

' ...and I'll tell you 189

another thing: Burroughs waggled an aggressive finger. He had been yapping in Nolbrow's ear

at every opportunity, and the captain found himself wishing once again the Doctor was there to Intercede.

But it seemed the strange little man and his companion had somehow vanished from *the Jupiter*. Several people

had seen them board the vessel, but none knew anything of them afterwards. Nolbrow found himself oddly

disappointed, but not altogether surprised. In all that had happened, their disappearance was one of the

least peculiar events.

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Àre you even listening to me, Captain?' Burroughs snapped.

Actually... no' Nolbrow smiled to himself as he turned and walked away, leaving the Professor staring open-

mouthed in his wake. Not as wltty a riposte perhaps as the Doctor might have managed, but to him it *felt* just as

satisfying.

In 1829, after an unlikely series of sinkings involving the crew of the* Mermaid*, during which not a life was lost,

Peter Richley was reunited with his mother on a passenger vessel bound for Sydney.

This is a true story.

The Man Who Wouldn't Give Up

Nev Fountain

There was this wheezing, groaning sound...

Thirteen pairs of eyes looked up in the direction of the sound, which was coming from the other side of the hill.

The source of the noise eventually revealed itself - to be a large and unpleasantly dressed man, who was struggling to

compensate for the gradient of the slope and his own unhealthy physique.

The pigs watched the man as he leaned on their sty wall for support. His eyes and cheeks bulged, but it was his lurid

waistcoat that swelled the most, threatening to decapitate the teddy bear buttons that clung grimly onto the north face of

his body.

His clothes looked as if they had been carefully designed not to coordinate with anything else in the known universe.

Whatever ambitions the insane tailor had in this respect had been sadly thwarted however, because at that moment the

large multi-coloured coat matched perfectly with the man's spluttering multi-coloured face.

The pigs lost interest in the man, save one, who peered at him from under heavy pink ears as the man slowly got his

breath back.

He looked at the pig.The pig looked at him.

For a lame ungainly creature... you're cleverer than you look.
Thought the man about the pig.

Or did the pig just think it about him?

Being telepathic it was so difficult to be sure.

The man hurriedly backed into the swineherd's but and headed towards the fire. Suddenly, he sensed someone behind

him.

The man turned and found the King's grim face staring at him. He also found the tip of a broadsword waved in his face.

His hands shot up until his ugly striped shirt cuffs poked out from the top of his ugly striped coat.

Ah.That's a very impressive looking weapon. Late ninth century isn't it? Yes, I suppose it would be, wouldn't it?'

The man braced himself. Not because of the deadly pointy thing threatening to make sushi out of his jowls, but

because he knew that in the next few seconds the King would start talking to him. It was not a prospect the man

normally approached with trepidation; he liked talking *a* lot. He was dreading this particular little chat, because (aside

from the reason he was there in the first place, of course) the machine that translated the many languages he

encountered in his travels had a

mischievous sense of humour, particularly when it came to the syntax of `historical figures'.

What's it going to be this time, old girl?* he thought. *Cod Shakespeare? BBC* Play For Today? *Or the best of the

lot, a pensions advisor from Worthing who's a member of the Sealed Knot society and gets defeated at the Battle of

Bosworth field every other weekend by a call centre manager called Dave dressed as Henry Tudor?

`Prithee sir. Who are you, and why do you intrude upon this place?' said the King, in perfect, slightly mannered

English.

Ah, that's not too bad,* thought the man. *Cod Shakespearian, with the odd bit of BBC flummery thrown in. At

least I'll get through this encounter with nothing but the odd Ifs' and another Prithee' if I'm extremely

unlucky..

The King inspected the man. `Zounds, you look a portly rogue'

Zounds?* the man sighed to himself. *Its only a short step from Zounds' to 'Hey nonny nonny' and then I'm going

to have a word with a certain Police Call Bax.

`Who me? Well if you're asking, I'm a wandering harpist entertaining our Danish cousins with a smile, a song, and

the odd tuneful pluck' The man beamed. 'I'm famous for my pluck,' he added shamelessly.

He stopped, as if for audience applause, got none, and continued; still adorned with the same cherubic

grinÀnyway, that's what I tell them. In reality, between you and me, I'm a spy. Investigating my Viking foes from

within in a typical courageous and foolhardy way... 'The man slapped his forehead in an exaggerated fashion. 'Oh

sorry, what am I saying? That's not my story at all, it's yours isn't it? Your Majesty'

The King stared at him for a long time, agapèYou know of me?'

ÒÍ course I do. You *are* a king, after all. You carry with you an unmistakeable aura of authority. Much like

myself'

Àre you a Danish spy?'

`Me? A spy? I wouldn't *Dane* to do anything like that!'

You could hear the inverted commas in the man's voice - large font, and in bold type. Once again the man waited

for his invisible crowds to give inaudible applause.

`But, seriously though, do I look like a Danish Spy?'

`No, sir, you do not. You do not look like any Dane I have seen: `Well, there you go'

`You do not look like anyone I have seen'

`Good, that's normally the impression I like to give: He tried to manoeuvre around the King. Ì don't

suppose I could have a warm by your fire?'

He moved towards the fire guttering in the hearth, but the King barred his way.

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`No? That's 3ll1 want, a little warm... By the fire'

He craned to look over the King's shoulder at the fire longingly, but the King would not let him pass.

`Now, tell me this, sir. No one knows I am here save a few kinsmen.Yet you are not surprised that I am here:

Ah.You noticed that:The man tried to grin in an unthreatening way. It wasn't something he should really attempt,

because he wasn't as good as it as he was used to. Yes, the smile did *start* in his brain as 'disarming and wise', but the

man's smiles, like certain wines, didn't travel well. On the long journey to his face, it lost its lustre and he feared it had

arrived at its destination as 'disturbing and smug'.

The King kept his sword aimed at the man. The silence grew like a fungus.

Seconds were stretched to snapping point, but suddenly the King's face folded in pain, and his body did likewise. The

man managed to catch the King as he headed to the floor.

Èasy there. What seems to be the trouble?'

Ìt is... an affliction that I have borne for some years,' gasped the King, clutching his guts.

The man felt the King's stomach So that's what it was. He'd been aware that the King had had problems with an

unspecific ailment for much of his later life, but he'd not expected the actual problem to be so... so... prosaic. The man

carried the King over to a pile of animal skins that passed for a bed.

'I have endured it since the day of my marriage,' said the King. Ì bear it as a penance from the Lord, for the happiness

that I was given that day'

That would be the marriage to Ealhswith, I gather... The daughter of Ethelred, chief of the Gaines -'

The King gripped the man's wrist. `You speak of things about which you should know nothing. How do you know so

much of me, stranger?'

`Well, to tell you the truth, I'm a wizard... From the kingdom of... of...' The man's mind groped around his short-term

memory for a good word. Òf... Hernia:

Ì... do not know of it:

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Ìt's very far to the north... Just across from the Henilands; said the

Ànd what is your business here?'

Ì assure you, I am no spy, merely an emissary from the future, sire...' The future?'

The King forgot his pain. He sat up warily

`Yes, sire. I have come to you on a matter of conscience. I have been troubled'

The man placed his hand across his brow and leant on the wall. In spite

of being in the company of a madman, a mystic, or probably

both, the King smiled at the theatrical way in which

the man unburdened himself. `But what could trouble a wizard from the future?'

Ìf you only knew... 'The man sighedÌt has been on my mind for some time. Something that has been part of my

own bitter experience.'

And what have you endured, wizard?'

`Well, you see, I've been thinking... Well, certain events have come to light... that have given me pause... And

made me consider, well, resolve if you like... How can I put this...

...I have been thinking about giving up,' said the man.

The girl frowned. The man had been gone a long time. He should have been back by now.

The King's shoulders slumped with sudden exhaustion`You are a wizard indeed, for just this morning such

thoughts came into *my* head:

`Really? What a coincidence ... '

The King looked into the fire listlessly, and prodded the small brown objects suspended above it. 'I have had

many troubles. After all my campaigns and battles, I live in exile, creeping stealthily in the midst of my enemies

while they sleep: He surveyed his grimy hands thoughtfully `Do I look just twenty-nine? The youth has fled my

face and hands just as the monks fled Lindisfarne with their gospel:

The man looked uncomfortable.

`My father Ethelwulf died of his worries...' the King continued in a flat emotionless drawl. 'Ethelred... Ethelbald...

All my older brothers... All have died fighting the Danish

invaders before I became king. Five good men have had

to lose their lives for me to stand here before you.'

The man stroked his chin thoughtfully 'Really? Perhaps we're not so different, after all...'

`What with the disasters at Anglia, and Reading... there have been many who have told me to give up; to make

peace with the Danes; to let them settle here, let them have Wessex. After all, they already have Mercia and

Northumbria...' The King's face darkened. 'But I know, from bitter experience, that they will not settle. King

Guthrun is a godless heathen. He has no Christian honour.'

The man was deep in thought. His conscience was prickling the inside of his head. He put such things aside, and

came to a decision.

It was now or never:But he will have sire. He will:

Ì do not understand...'

He rested his hand on the King's shoulder:Would you be amazed if I told you that Guthrum would find

Christian honour in his soul? That in time the Danish king would even kneel and join you in prayer?'

The King choked on his laughter 'Your mind is as colourful as your dress, wizard, you say that *Guthrum*

`Will become a Christian, yes. Furthermore, hostilities will be ended: The man sat by him. 'Really, sire, it would

be folly to give up now When you have such a prize before you. Remember the cave?'

`The... cave?'

That little spider who kept trying to make his web? He never gave up, did he?'

Ì do... not...'

Òh, no, that wasn't you, is it? That was Robert the Bruce. I always get you mixed up with him. Never mind:

He helped the King to his feet. 'You may live in exile now, but you are on the verge of a great triumph,

Secundarius,' said the man. 'Come with me:

He led the King to the door of the but and swept his gaudy arm into the sky, Which was bruising to a mottled

purple.

`Do not give up, sire. Because waiting for you out there are great victories. Take it from this humble Hernian

mystic. Athelney will fall. So will Anglia. And so, in time, will London. A great peace will eventually descend this

land:

He pointed a pudgy figure upwards.

`You see that star?' said the man. 'The North Star? That star is you. That star is Wessex. It may be on its own

now, but as the night draws in it will be joined by others. Many many others.Thanks to you they will coalesce and

reform into a greater whole. You will become king, not only of a region, but of a whole country. A country that

shall eventually be called England...'

The King looked up at the sky, and as he did so eyes blazed like the fire that had illuminated his face. The same

fire that the man stealthily returned to. And this is just there for me, if I do not give up...?'

Ì give you my word, sire. A gift from the future. All you have to do is unwrap it:

Àll this...' He remembered the man's words. 'And what of you, wizard? What awaits you if you do not give up?'

`Not as big a prize as you, I fancy... Fortunately for myself, after some thought, and after our little chat, I have

taken it upon myself to make it my resolve *not* to give up...'

`You are wise, wizard...'

Nothing.

`Wizard?'

He looked round.The man had gone.

The pig watched the man huff his way down the hill. He was stuffing things in his pocket as he went.

`Well, did whatever-it-is go okay?' He was greeted in his time machine by a girl whose body seemed to bounce

above the floor.

Òh, yes. Couldn't have been better,' said the man, a little guiltily 'It was a complete success, though I do say so

myself'

She narrowed her mascara-laden eyes in deep suspicion.

Ì suppose one day you'll tell me what these mysterious missions of yours are, and why you have to slip away

on your own in terms of the utmost secrecy...?'

Òh, yes, I expect so, Mel, said the man. 'Eventually'

`Never give up ... '

The King was still staring mistily out of the swineherd's hut. The swineherd's wife had returned with faggots

and was attending to the fire. She was keeping one eye on this mysterious minstrel who had inveigled his way into

her home. Her husband may have had time for such scoundrels

but she, who did the cooking and leaning, did not have

such a charitable nature.

`Minstrel?'

`Wise words, my mystic friend...' He seemed not to be aware of her. `Minstrel... Where are the cakes?'

`

,

what?

The cakes, you idiot.The cakes I expressly asked you to watch over.' He looked.The cakes had gone.

The wizard! He took the bloody cakes!'

`What wizard?'

`The... wizard who was here! He took the cakes! He gave me great portents, he told me of the future, but not

to inspire me and fulfil my destiny, but to take my attention from the fire! Just to take the cakes!'

`What wizard? There is no one here. And what destiny can a lowly minstrel fulfil save for staying another

night here without me taking a broomstick to your arse? Your brain is addled.' She leant down and felt the bed.

'You have been asleep and had a dream, you useless boghead:

Ì tell you he... Well, that just takes the...' The King stopped, and thought, and stilled his tongue, like all wise

kings should when they are disguised as humble harpists deep in enemy territory

`Yes, you are right, mistress. I fell asleep, and when I awoke... I... I had burnt the cakes. I was ashamed to tell

you. Such a simple thing to do, and I couldn't accomplish it:

The swineherd's wife gave a chessboard grin. There you go, foolish musician. It's not that hard to be an honest

man, is it?'

The girl turned to leave, and the man stuffed something in his mouth. Unfortunately a thought had occurred to the girl,

who made an abrupt about-turn and bounced back into the room. He spun around and faced the doors.

`You're looking much better you know, don't you agree?'

`mhh-mmm?'

`Your diet is definitely working. There's defmitely more colour in your cheeks'

Mmmm.'

`Now don't sulk. You'll thank me in the long run. Think of all those dreadful fats and carbohydrates you've been

swilling around your body. I'm glad you agreed to give all that up.'

She left at last. The man swallowed.

There was big white desk with a glass mushroom growing out of it in the centre of the room, and the man headed

grimly towards it, his fingers mashing the buttons. There was no way he was giving up anything. Not while he had

history to help him.

`Now, where next, I wonder...'

There was this wheezing, groaning sound...

Thirteen pairs of eyes looked up at the direction of the sound,

which came from the other side of the room.A blue

temple had appeared, and a man emerged.

He looked at the King.The King looked at him.

Hmm... I always guessed you'd look quite formidable. I can see just wbere you get your reputation from...

Thought the man about the King.

Or did the King think it about him?

Being telepathic it was so difficult to be sure.

The man beamed and spread his arms wide. `My, my! What a spread! This looks rather splendid. Do you mind if I join you?

Lovely looking fish - did you catch them yourself? I always like a little wine with a meal Is this your cup? Can I borrow it

then? Don't look at me like that, I'll give it back. What do you mean, you doubt it? Of course I will. Are you going to eat

that bread, or are you just going to wave it about? I don't care what it is, it's going to go very well with these olives. Will

you pass the olives please...? Thanks!'

One Small Step...

Nicholas Briggs

The little boy was sitting in the bath. He was a bit nervous. He would have felt better if he'd been allowed to lock the

door; but bathing alone was a new experience for him, and his parents were scared that he might come to grief in

three inches of water with them locked outside in the hallway unable to rescue him It wasn't really a credible

threat, but parents worry about little boys alone in baths, and this little boy was, by and large, obedient and had

co-operatively opted-in to being wary of the three, deadly inches of bath water.

But what if someone were to wander uninvited into this modest, modern bungalow at 59 Barnsfield Crescent, and

accidentally walk into the bathroom and find the little boy all bare and embarrassed in the bath? That was the fear

currently occupying the little boy's mind. Every time he swished the water around to wash himself, a hot

foreboding would overtake him, making him stop to listen for unknown intruders in the hallway.

For the umpteenth time, the water settled into silence as the little boy strained to listen for potential bath-

crashers. For the umpteenth time, the coast seemed to be clear.

Then suddenly, there really was a noise. Feet padding gently on a carpet. Then the creak of a floorboard.

`Who's that?' the little boy asked.

The noises stopped. The bath water settled. The little boy's face began to burn with worry and his tummy

churned with the lurking feeling that he really was about to become very scared indeed.

`Hello?' he nervou 192

s 0l90**y ventured.**

Ìt's only me, was the instant reply. And so warm, recognisable and reassuring was this voice, that the little

boy's face cooled, his tummy calmed and the fear evaporated. He would now continue to swish bath water

without even a drop of fear for the whole of the rest of his life. From now on, baths would always be safe and

reassuring - and no one would ever burst in by accident... And even if they did, it wouldn't matter.

The Doctor, Jamie and Zoe were relaxing in Compton Bay on the Isle of Wight, just off the central south coast of

England, Earth. Facing out across a moderately sparkling English Channel, beneath a respectably English

summer blue sky, the time-space travellers wriggled their toes in the sand, giggled quite a bit and occasionally took it

in turns to throw each other, ùnexpectedly', into the foaming surf.

`Well, then!' announced the Doctor with unfathomable significance. Zoe stopped throwing sand up Jamie's

kilt. Jamie, who was pretending to ignore her efforts and the increasingly uncomfortable grittiness, was glad of the

interruption.

I think it's time for some ice cream, don't you?' It wasn't really a question. Ì won't be long!' said the Doctor as he

began marching off up the beach.

Jamie gave Zoe a look. She knew that look and immediately jumped to her feet and ran, screaming. But it was

too late.The bold Highland warrior soon had her in his clutches. The surf beckoned, and neither of them could

stop laughing.

Clambering up the makeshift cliffside stairway, the Doctor grinned and chuckled to himself at the sound of Jamie

and Zoe's seaside squawking. It was good to relax for a change. Somehow, the Quarks, Krotons, Cybermen and

deadly clockwork soldiers just didn't seem real from the perspective of a sandy beach. Raygun blasts and the

screams of terror were swallowed by the crashing, soothing surf

It was an excellent time to visit Earth for a holiday, because almost the entire planet was preoccupied with

events taking place just a few thousand miles out in space. A chap called Neil Armstrong had stepped from his

fragile little spaceship onto the surface of Earth's lifeless moon some time in the early hours of this morning.

Consequently, the majority of Earthlings were gathered around their television sets, avidly watching what looked

like semi-transparent white blobs bouncing around on a grey, crater-pitted backdrop. This all left Compton

Bay largely and pleasantly deserted.

The Doctor reached the top of the cliff and headed across an unevenly grassy field towards an ice-cream van

marooned in the middle of a fairly empty car park. He had rolled his trousers up to his knees and taken off his

shoes and socks to paddle in the sea earlier, and so was now being very careful to avoid sharp stones and cow-

pats. As he approached the van, a cow nuzzled him and left a nasty, sticky stain on his white shirt.The Doctor had

never quite worked out why cows were always so friendly towards him.

Ìt likes you; came a squeaky little voice from somewhere below the Doctor's eyeline. Stopping, the Doctor

looked down to see a little boy wearing swimming trunks and a T-shirt.

`Hello,' said the Doctor. 'Yes, she does, doesn't she?' He smiled at the little boy.

`Mind you don't tread in the cow poo; said the little boy, eager to help it seemed.

Òh...' The Doctor couldn't help laughing. 'Yes... Yes, I will mind out. Thank you'

Ì saw a cow do a big poo here once,' the little boy said. The Doctor suspected this was an important secret he

only shared with friends.

Èrm, did you? Well, that's not very nice, is it?' said the Doctor,

not knowing quite what else to say.

No: agreed the little boy, enthusiastically. 'It squirted right up in the air and went right from one side of the

path, where the cow was, right over the other side:

The little boy had described the arc of poo trajectory with an outstretched finger. The Doctor had

earnestly followed it, wishing he hadn't, as it was putting him off the idea of an ice cream.

`My mummy says I shouldn't talk about it,' said the little boy.

Lost for words, the Doctor nodded, trying to look as if the anecdote had

given him food for great thoughts.That seemed to satisfy the little boy. And where is your mummy?' inquired the

Doctor, politely

`They're all in

the c 01

ottage, watching the moon thing on the telly.' Òh And did you watch it?'

A bit. But it was rubbish. It was all blurred and blobby.'

Ànd do your mummy and daddy know you're out here on your own?' At this, the little boy suddenly looked

worried.

`No, I don't think they do, do they?' said the Doctor, as understandingly as possible. 'So, I want you to go back

to the cottage and ask them if it's all right. Will you do that for me?'

Looking worried, the little boy nodded and straightaway scampered off.

The Doctor had only just reached the ice-cream van, still smiling to himself, when he heard the sound of a car's

tyres screeching on the road. And when he turned and saw that the little boy had run out in front of a car and had

been knocked down, he froze and felt utterly powerless.

The car door opened and the driver ran screaming to where the boy's body had fallen. The man from the ice-cream

van ran too. The little boy struggled to move. He wasn't dead.The Doctor knew that this little boy's legs had been

smashed beyond repair.

He felt that talking to the little boy had been the worst thing he'd ever done. He didn't want an ice cream any more. He

ran back down the cliff, slipping and sliding, nearly falling; splinters from the rickety wooden steps digging into his heels.

Jamie and Zoe were drying off in the sun when they felt the Doctor march past them So big were his strides that he

accidentally kicked sand in Zoe's face.

`Hoy!' she cried out, sitting bolt upright, anticipating another imminent surf-dunking. Both she and Jamie watched, very

nearly open-mouthed as the Doctor strode immediately to the landing site of the invisible TARDIS. Without hesitation, he'd

fished out his key and was vanishing from view.

Luckily, no one else on the beach was looking in their direction at the time.

Ànd bring my coat!' shouted the now invisible Doctor.

`Doctor, what...?' started Jamie. But Zoe knew that tone of voice and what disturbed her was that she'd never

heard the Doctor use it before.

`Something's terribly wrong: she said, and Jamie knew she was right. Without another word, the two of them

gathered their things and entered the TARDIS.

Inside, the Doctor stared into the rising and falling control column, seemingly hypnotised by its surging power.

He waited for a thought to fall into place.

Ìt would get me in to awful trouble: he said softly to himself. Then his hands calmly moved over the ship's

controls, manipulating levers and switches.

`What have you done?' asked Zoe. But almost immediately, she sensed that the Doctor would never answer.

Four hours earlier, the TARDIS made its second invisible arrival in Compton Bay. This time, only a sea-

soaked, sandy dog was aware of anything being amiss, knocking itself senseless by unwittingly running at full pelt

into the craft's unseen outer shell.

The three travellers exited wearily into visibility. This had been a long, meandering return journey, and Jamie had

actually completely forgotten why they'd come back. When he started to ask questions, Zoe gave him the kind of

look that always made him feel very stupid, so he shut up.

The Doctor plonked himself down on the sand. It was obvious *he* hadn't forgotten. Zoe looked hard into his

tired eyes and noticed that they'd reddened somewhat.

`Why don't you take your jacket off?' she asked him.

`Like I did before?' said the Doctor. Zoe nodded, and smiled in a way to let him know she understood how he

was feeling. Jamie was digging a hole in the sand. Best to keep out of this, he thought.

Ì'm not going to do anything I did before: continued the Doctor. Not anything.'

`No ice cream?' asked Jamie. Zoe gave him that look again. Òh, come on, you two! We've had a terrible time,

lately. Those last three planets were awful. And that yellow thing with five... !'

Zoe wanted to bury her burly Scots friend so that the tide would wash over him. Instead, she just opted for

throwing a handful of sand into his face. It caught him full in his open mouth.

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`Right!' he splutte 203

red and charged at her, bellowing his best Highland war cry

The Doctor managed a feeble smile and a short chuckle as Jamie dragged Zoe off and deposited her in the

surf. It was almost the same as last time. But the Doctor wouldn't roll up his trousers, wouldn't take off his

shoes and socks... and *there would be no ice cream.*

The hours passed, and soon the Doctor simply began to stare at the top of the cliff. When the roof of an ice-

cream van became visable, he fixed his eyes on it and continued to stare. Eventually the sun began to settle and the

ice-cream van slid away to the distant, diminishing hum of an engine.

The tide was out and Jamie was trying to find crabs in rock pools. Zoe wondered what Jamie found so exciting

about crabs... until he found one and tried to drop it down the front of her blouse. She swiftly put a stop to his

antics by threatening to introduce the next crab she saw to the warm, inviting shelter of his kilt. Jamie pelted

off across the beach, as if trying to chase the tide out further.

Zoe looked back towards the Doctor. He was still looking at the

clifftop, his face so utterly glum that the deep

folds of his forehead and jowls seemed to have set in concrete. Zoe longed for the Doctor to brighten again and

become the lovely little man who was such fun to be with. He had always seemed so indestructible; respectfully

fearful of the terrors the universe had to offer, but never fazed by them; always eager to move on. Above all, she had

always felt that the Doctor was emotionally robust.And then, in one moment, when his defences were down, a tiny

tragedy had pierced his armour.

Just as the sun began giving off its pre-sunset, fiery glow, some activity broke out at the top of the cliff. Noticing

this, the Doctor immediately straightened from his slump.

Zoe dared not even breathe as she watched. Jamie was returning with the first gentle washes of a turning

tide. He stopped dead when he saw the people climbing down the cliff steps. The look on his face told Zoe that

he now remembered the story the Doctor had told him months ago. The story of the little boy who had been run

over by a motor car… And this must be the little boy, thought Jamie.

***It was* the little boy.The Doctor was certain. The little boy and his family, heading down to the beach for a**

barbecue…

The Doctor closed his eyes and let out a long, exhausted sigh.This time, the little boy had come to the car park,

but there had been no Doctor there to talk to him, no Doctor to tell him to go home. No Doctor to *interfere.*

Mind you, if *they* ever realised what lengths he had gone to, what rules he broken this time…

For a moment, the Doctor wondered what the little boy had decided to do in his absence; but it didn't matter.

The car had not hit him That's the

I important thing, thought the Doctor, and he headed for the TARDIS, with Zoe and Jamie obediently following.

As the grown-ups noisily busied themselves with barbecue preparations on the beach, only the little boy thought

he heard a strange sound - but there was nothing strange to see. Just the sand... and the sea...

Inside the TARDIS, flicking switches and tapping his chin as he thoughtfully peered at the controls, the

Doctor was enjoying a feeling of normality. Zoe squeezed his sleeve. Jamie gave an affirming smile. The Doctor felt

pleased to have such warm friends. He smiled, and promised himself not to think of the little boy again.

He only broke that promise once.

Wrapped in two towels, the little boy entered the living room, triumphant and proud that he had survived the bath.

His parents seemed pleased too. `Where's Uncle Mick?' asked the little boy.

His mum and dad smiled, but were clearly a little confused. Uncle Mick hadn't been to visit. Nobody had called in.

And neither of them had left the living room the whole time the little boy had been in the bath.

`But there was someone in the hall outside the bathroom: insisted the little boy.

`How do you know?' asked Mum.

`He said something.' Already the little boy was having difficulty remembering the sound of the voice. In

fact, he couldn't remember whose voice it had sounded like at all. It had just been... a good voice.A reassuring

voice...

`What did he say?' asked Dad.

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"It's only me",' sa 205

id the little boy. He felt a bit chilly for a moment, as if looking at an unfamiliar smile for the first

time. But then the chill went away; the little boy didn't worry anymore, and his parents forgot all about it the

way parents do.

But the little boy never forgot. And neither did the Doctor.

To Kill a Nandi Bear

Paul Williams

Sarah was first out of the TARDIS, gasping in the humid climate She stood on parched sand with thin grass and the

beginnings of a forest to her left. There was a steep slope ahead. Several large flies were buzzing around but

avoided her, even though she wasn't wearing any insect repellent. In the cloudless sky, an enormous sun beamed

munificently down. Harry quickly removed navy jumper and slung it over his shoulder. The Doctor retained his hat,

long scarf and coat.

`Nyasaland, he said. 'Or it will be in about four hundred years' Seeing the puzzled expressions of his

companions, he hastily added, 'You'll probably know it as Malawi'

Sarah knew very little about African geography.

'Near South Africa?' guessed Harry.

Èuropean divisions have no meaning yet, said the Doctor. He

began walking up the slope. Sarah and Harry

followed, acclimatising quickly. Perhaps we'll see a lion,' said Harry excitedly.

Instead they found a body.

It was lying diagonally on the other side of the hill, giving the impression that the man had stumbled and fallen to

his death. As they scrambled quickly towards it, feet sliding on the treacherous surface, two grey canids ran away

quickly. A trio of vultures rose simultaneously into the air and flew off together, twisting their ugly heads to

glare balefully at the intruders who dared disturb their meal.

`Wolves?' asked Harry, looking at the retreating canids.

`Hyenas, corrected the Doctor.

Harry bent down and started examining the corpse. Sarah stayed back, unable to stomach an odour exacerbated

by the heat. She saw the body of a black male, probably in his early forties. He lay on his right side and the

scavengers had removed most of the left. Eyes which had been hazel stared sightlessly into space, not flickering

when one of the myriad flies ambled across them.

During her travels with the Doctor, Sarah had seen many dead people but the sight still unnerved her; still

made her think about her own mortality. Harry was different. His medical training allowed him to view corpses

from a more detached perspective.

`There are a lot of injuries,' he said. 'But mostly inflicted after death.The animals have been busy'

`What killed him?' asked Sarah.

The Doctor was about to answer when he flicked his head

sideways and pointed.A group of people were

approaching from the left. Sarah was accustomed to images, and descriptions, of emaciated Africans so she was

surprised to see that the males, although lean, were muscular and showed no signs of malnutrition. The women

looked well fed and several were pregnant. This didn't seem to stop them moving at the same pace as the men.

Some carried wooden spears. All of them were naked and progressed without noise. If the Doctor hadn't

turned they would have reached the group without being detected. As they drew nearer, Sarah counted twenty.

Two men, both with spears, detached themselves from the group and came forward. The first was about forty,

and very fit. The second was, at a guess, in his late thirties and equally strong. He smiled continuously, revealing

sizeable gaps in gleaming white teeth.

Mposi: said the first man grimly indicating the corpse. Then he looked at the Doctor, instinctively identifying

him as the leader`Who are you?'

The Doctor introduced himself and his companions, unperturbed by the spears. Was Mposi a friend of

yours?' he added.

`No questions,' snapped the second man. He examined the corpse then leapt back and muttered in a hushed

voice, but loud enough for the people to hear. Duba:

The crowd also moved back.The man raised his spear and turned to the Doctor`Did you see duba?'

Ì thought his name was Mposi,' said Sarah.

`The duba is our enemy,' said the nativeÌt kills without warning' À lion?' guessed Harry

`You're obsessed with lions; said Sarah.

Ì've only mentioned them twice,' he protested:It would be nice to have an authentic African experience'

Sarah didn't appreciate the authenticity of being surrounded by naked people, some of them with weapons.

Duba is a tribal name for the Nandi bear,' said the Doctor slowly. Ì didn't know there were any bears in

Africa:

`There aren't:

The first man was also now looking at the corpse, taking care not to touch it. Finally he straightened, consulted

in whispers with his colleague and turned back.

`He wasn't killed by a bear,' said Harry. 'I'm a doctor and I should know.' `Doctor?' questioned the second man.

'What did kill him then?'

Ì can't tell without doing a postmortem.'

`Postmortem?'

Harry, who had yet to learn the art of simplifying speech in strange

places, made a cutting motion with his fingers. The man lifted his eyebrows, yelled something

undistinguishable and twirled his spear. `Perhaps not,' said Sarah.

'It is forbidden to interfere with the dead,' said the first man. 'You are clearly not familiar with our customs but

nor can you be from the high gods. Where is your home?'

`They are evil; said the second man`Sorcerers who summoned

duba to kill Mposi:

The Doctor laughed. 'If we wanted to kill Mposi we wouldn't need to employ a legendary bear.'

`Why would we want to kill him anyway?' asked Harry.A good question, which nobody answered. Sarah was

fed up with being accused of murdering strangers everywhere she went. Didn't modern statistics say that

ninety per cent of victims were killed by people they knew? Presumably that applied everywhere.

Still riot touching his friend's body the second man pointed at the base of the head`Look at the state of his

skull.That's how duba kills'

`That's what happens when you fall,' retorted Harry

`He was healthy'

`How much alcohol did he drink yesterday?' asked the Doctor.

Ìt was his daughter's wedding; admitted the first man. 'But we all drank'

A combination of excessive drinking and a weak heart. Perhaps he heard something and went to investigate,

then fell in the dark'

`Perhaps he heard then saw duba: The second man was obviously warming to his theory, still smiling but

now there was something unpleasant in his expression.A hint of triumph.

Ì've never even heard of the Nandi Bear; said Harry

`Reported by various tribes and other witnesses throughout Africa but never acknowledged as a real beast by

science,' said the Doctor`Dubbah spelt with an aitch is a common word for hyena, so some people think that

the Nandi Bear is an unusual and more aggressive species of hyena'

Ìt is not hyena; said the second man loudly. He then addressed his colleague. 'Mposi is killed by the duba then

these creatures arrive. They must be connected'

`You're very fond of making assumptions; said the Doctor`Who are you by the way?'

The man was silent.

Ìt's only polite to tell us your name,' said Sarah.

`He is the shaman of our tribe,' said the first man. And I am the chief.' `So who's in charge?' asked the Doctor.

Ì am; said the chief, although the shaman looked mutinous. And you think that we were involved in

Mposi's death?'

Ì don't know.' His honesty encouraged Sarah. She relaxed a little. 'Can you prove that you weren't?'

'How long has he been dead?'

`Four hours; said the shaman.

'That's very precise' Harry sounded suspicious.

The shaman shrugged. 'We know the signs,' he muttered.

`Yes, but even so...' Harry had also not learnt that arguing with people who had the means to kill you was not a

good idea.

Èven if he's an hour out; said the Doctor, 'that would mean we've been

hanging around at the scene of the crime for an awfully long

time: `You were checking the work of the

duba: declared the shaman. 'Or maybe we were looking for it. Isn't that more likely? We want to

prevent death not cause it:

`That's true, said Harry 'If there was a do-da, or whatever you call it, we would have removed it for you'

Duba kills the strongest warriors; said the shaman. 'What chance would you have?'

You credited us with the powers to control the duba. Surety those powers could also be used to eliminate

it:The Doctor looked thoroughly pleased with his own reasoning and matched the shaman's smile

Trove it,' ordered the shaman 'Let us see you kill duba. Now.'

`How can we kill something that doesn't exist?' asked Sarah.

`Duba is real and Mposi's death must be avenged. If there is no duba to kill then you will die in its place:The

shaman stabbed his spear in the sand.

'Hardly fair; remarked Harry. Sarah could follow the shaman's reasoning. If the Nandi Bear was believed to be

an agent of divine retribution then something had to be done to appease the deliverers. The Doctor said nothing

but stared at the chief.

Uncomfortable under this scrutiny, the chief reflected. 'I will give you a day to remove the duba forever from our

land. If you fail you will be killed' His voice was sad as he finished speaking.

`They will just leave; said the shaman. 'One at least must be kept prisoner:

The chief pointed at Sarah. 'The girl can be kept in custody.' Harry started to protest. 'She will not be

harmed: promised the chief.

Sarah believed him

It was a short walk to the tribe's settlement which was simply a collection of wooden huts sprawled across the

countryside. Plenty of thin goats were perambulating about and chewing blades of grass. A lot of children looked

curiously at the travellers, despite being told to get out of the way by the chief.

The Doctor and Harry were taken into the largest but whilst Sarah was

placed into a smaller one. It smelt of urine - human as well as animal, she suspected - and strong alcohol.There were a

lot of noisy flies..The guards left her, but one stayed by the entrance with his back to her. Not endeared by the sight

of his curvaceous bum, she sat on the soft, warm ground and waited for the Doctor to talk his way out of trouble

like he usually did.

The chief perched on the floor in his but and ordered food to be brought to his strange guests. Meat and small

jugs of water were quickly fetched. The Doctor refused his drink, passing it back to the bearer. Harry

hesitated, then drank. Sufficient proof of his mortality, he hoped.

`They say that you are a chiruwi,' said the chief to the Doctor.

`Have I asked you to wrestle?'

`You know some of our beliefs?'

Ì don't,' said Harry, helping himself to some meat but having trouble holding it. 'What is a chiruwi?'

A monster that challenges people to wrestling matches, explained the Doctor:If it wins the person dies. If it loses

then it gives medicine and other benefits.'

`We could give you medicine. Harry looked down at his hands and looked vexed. Some of the tribe washed

their fingers after eating but it was not widely practiced and the chief could not spare more water.

`We are not asking 2 09

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you for gifts,' said the chief.

Just to rid you of the Nandi Bear, smiled the Doctor. 'Which you don't believe in anyway'

Ì did not say that:

`Your body language did:

How could the Doctor explain to this learned man, thought Harry, that the tribe depended on the shaman and

the shaman's beliefs? If his power was broken then every storm, every attack by a predator, every failure to find

food would be blamed on this *rash* action.The system worked for his people. The chief did not understand it and did

not follow the logic but he could not introduce widespread change. The risk lay not in the retaliation of the

elements but in the loss of his own credibility.

His reply was cautiousÌ accept that there may be a natural reason for Mposi's demise. Death is not uncommon

in the tribe. Last night Mposi went in search of a lost cow which he wanted to kill for his daughter. I have

sometimes fallen in the dark after drinking too much alcohol. Mposi was older and perhaps, if he fell down that

slope, he would not have been able to rise again. He might also have encountered a small predator, one that is

known to all.That to me is more acceptable than death at the hands of the duba. As far as I know he was a good

man. Why would the gods decide to kill him in such a fashion on such a happy day?'

`Have you ever seen a duba?' asked the Doctor

`Never. It is a legend told to scare children and to preserve the honour of those killed by lesser beasts. We have

hunted in every inch of the area around here for generations. What is this animal that appears irregularly, and

only to selected witnesses? Where are the prints that it leaves and the evidence of its feeding? Nowhere.'

Belatedly he looked up to ensure that none of the tribe had overheard. The guard in the doorway was out of

earshot and there were no other witnesses.

`Then tell this to your people,' said Harry. "they'll listen to you' `They also listen to the shaman:

An ideal chance to assert your authority' The Doctor began walking around the side of the hut. The guard

looked in but the chief waved him away:You realise that the shaman doesn't believe either? He just tells your people

that he does and they follow him'

Ì cannot read another man's mind,' he said diplomatically. Harry saw that the chief did not appreciate non-

members of the tribe pointing things out to him

`So, you're not prepared to challenge the shaman? Even though we could be powerful gods ready to retaliate

if we are threatened:

Ìf you were so powerful we would not be talking 'The chief took some food for himselfÌ think that you are

humans just like us'

`Hardly' said Harry

`There is one fundamental difference, commented the Doctor. He stopped walking and looked sternly into

the chiefs eyes. 'We don't stand by and watch innocent people die:

After Sarah had been in prison for thirty minutes, according to a watch that hadn't yet been made, a girl

brought her meat and water. Presumably all the alcohol had been consumed at the party. The host was probably

twelve or thirteen, moving deftly and smiling all the time but it was a friendlier smile than that of the shaman

`Your friends have refreshments,' she said. 'They talk with our chief? And the women do nothing? Typical'

`We do not have time to talk, said the girl seriously. 'There is so much to be done. Food must be prepared, crops

must be tended, animals must be looked after and children nurtured.The men are able to discuss whilst we work'

Sarah grinned.

`Did you see my father die?'

The smile faded. 'Mposi?'

She nodded. 'It is bad to die alone:

`We found him afterwards; explained Sarah. She couldn't lie although she wanted to reassure the girl. 'We

would have helped if we could' Was

that a lie? If they had found Mposi dying of an ailment that could only be cured by modern drugs would they have

intervened? On her previous trips into Earth's past the Doctor had done his best to assist locals when required but she

didn't know if that included using technology, and other practices, that hadn't yet been developed.The idea unnerved her

The girl saw her discomfort and sat watching her for a few seconds. `You are not like us: she said. Sarah tried to think

of a reply but could only think that the girl was too young to be a bride. She was grateful for the sudden appearance of

the Doctor in the doorway.

`We're going to find the Nandi Bear,' he announced.

Outside many of the tribe, perhaps forty, had gathered.The chief took his place at their head with the shaman Sarah and

the Doctor joined them

`Make sure that you remind the people not to attack the dubs,' said the Doctor`My magic will not work if there is any

interference'

The chief relayed these instructions although Sarah noted that more of the tribe were now carrying spears`Magic?'

she whispered.

A simple deception'

The procession began. Some of the men carried drums, which the Doctor said were called ulimbas, and began

banging on them. Sarah felt that the noise would be likely to deter the Nandi Bear and any other animal in the

vicinity but she knew better than to interfere with local customs.The Doctor seemed very calm.

`Where's Harry?' she asked, not seeing him in the mass of bodies.

Ìt's his turn to stay here.You're coming with me' He clearly didn't want to elaborate. They walked forward until they

came to the edge of the forest.Then the Doctor, seemingly without effort, accelerated ahead of the group and began

chanting in a low, rhythmic tone that reminded Sarah of the old

Doctor taming the beast on Peladon. After a while,

something moved in the bushes.

'I hope you haven't attracted anything nasty,' she said to herself, shlvering despite the heat.

A biped came slowly out of the forest. A tall biped, about six feet in height, and walking on two legs. It had dark,

smooth skin and ponderous breasts. Sarah doubted that it was indigenous to Africa, or even Earth, in her time.The

unreality of the situation hit her and she felt like an extra in a slow movie.

Chanting and cheering the tribe began following the Nandi Bear, which walked surprisingly slowly. It never looked

back and stumbled a few tlmes. Sarah found that strange. Bears were able to get about quicker on all fours and

usually would avoid people.This one seemed unbothered by their presence. After ten minutes of the creature's prowling,

she realised that it was heading towards the TARDIS. Suddenly it accelerated.

A spear flew over Sarah's head and rebounded off the TARDIS, narrowly missing the Nandi Bear.

`No, called the chief belatedly.

The Nandi Bear turned and snarled menacingly. Then it leapt at the TARDIS.To Sarah's amazement it produced a

key seemingly from inside its paw, unlocked the door, and casually strolled inside.

The shaman was the first to react. He ran at the TARDIS and waved his spear in the air.Then he circled the box

warily with a puzzled look on his face. Finally he stood upright, threw his hands towards the sky and shouted

angrily 'Evil:

The Doctor stepped forward. The shaman backed away, holding the spear like a shield.

Èvil, agreed the Doctor, slapping the door of the TARDIS. "This container has trapped the dubs. Now I will

take it away`

The chief clapped. Nobody else did. They were watching the Doctor with a mixture of awe, admiration and fear in

their expressions. Except for the shaman who simply looked angry

Ì need my assistant's help,' continued the Doctor. 'Sarah?'

She moved to join him, conscious that a spear could land in her back at any moment. The atmosphere felt tense

after the carnival-like feel of the chase, and it seemed that the sun had stopped producing heat.The Doctor opened the

door of the TARDIS very slightly, not enough to let the shaman or anyone else see inside. Sarah squeezed through and

he followed. The door dosed.

Harry Sullivan stood in the TARDIS console room with bare feet. His boots were on the floor, along with a pair of

predictably naval socks and a rolled-up monkey costume. Close up it looked more pathetic than terrifying.

`Do you want this old suit back in the costume cupboard?' he asked the Doctor.

"That's a Bigfoot n212

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t a Nandi Bear, said Sarah. She made no attempt to hide her irritation at not seeing through

the deception.

`Got it from a chap called Patterson in California,' said the Doctor`Can't think why he wanted to get rid of it:

`Probably because it was too hot! Harry put his socks back on. 'I couldn't run around in that for long:

Ì'm surprised you did it at all,' said Sarah.

All for you, old girl. Only way to save our skins:

`You nearly got your own skin pierced, she responded.

Harry shrugged and made for the door that led into the TARDIS interior. Sarah looked at the silent Doctor`You

don't approve; she said.

Ìt was my idea:

`Doesn't make it right.'

He grimaced. 'Because of us people in that region will believe in the Nandi Bear for centuries. We've held back

the progress of science'

`Represented in men like the chief: she said. The Doctor nodded. helped you,' she continued. 'He must have

known enough to stop the people from attacking!

`He didn't want to deceive them: There was anguish in the Doctor's voice. She understood that. There were

times when self-interest led to conflict. Harry still saw everything as one big adventure. Like the Doctor. Sarah was

beginning to realise the impact that they had on the people they encountered. She had once written an article

criticising tourists who failed to respect native customs in Peru.This was similar.

She yawned, realising that she felt tired. Her skin was also starting to peel, as a result of sunburn.After a shower

she would go to bed and dream of a continent that she wished had stayed undiscovered.

The tribe were astounded by a whining sound emanating from

the 'evil' box. Several threw themselves to the

ground. The shaman remained standing, watching impassively as the box faded away. Enraged, he picked up his

spear and spoke to the chief. 'We have been tricked. That was not duba but the third stranger in disguise.You

knew about this!

The chief had been taught never to deliberately lie, even when his life was at stake. He replied firmly. 'Yes, I

knew'

`Betrayal,' hissed the shaman. He moved forward with his spear angled.

The chief felt the first strike but kept his eyes open long enough to see the rest of the tribe moving in. He

imagined that Mposi was amongst them then his mind drifted to a place that would never be discovered.

His body was dumped on the sand, about a mile from the settlement. When the people had departed, still

banging the ulimbas, a dubbah emerged and began to eat.

Fixing a Hole

Samantha Baker

`Come along, said the Doctor, calling impatiently back in through the TARDIS door. He brrrr'd and shivered,

and whilst he waited he peered through the snow, which was falling almost sideways due to a strong wind.

He glanced once more over his shoulder but couldn't see his companion. She'd gone to get some

warmer clothing, the Doctor remembered: in her colonial accent, she had been saying something about

being sick to death of cold climates when he'd stopped listening and announced he was going to see what was

outside. The scanner had been no help, showing simply a white haze. The atmospheric read-outs had indicated

breathable air, a solid enough gravity and a temperature of minus five - but nothing to show them just precisely

***where* they were.**

Òh, will you get a move on!' The Doctor sighed, and pulled his royal blue cape closer. He shook his blond curls

free of the increasing amounts of snow and pulled up his hood. It wasn't like her to dawdle, he thought. Or, at

least, it didn't used to be. The snow was too thick, and it was too dark, to see much of his surroundings.What was up

ahead? A road of some description, surely. When he squinted, the Doctor thought he could make out something, a

vehicle perhaps or a -

'Well: said his assistant as she closed the TARDIS door behind her. I'm ready'

Àbout time,' the Doctor chided. Come along, Tegan:

The uniform looked good on her. It always bad. It gave her authority, it gave her a purpose, a place in the world.

When she'd lost it - both metaphorically and actually - she'd had the Doctor and the TARDIS and an entire

universe to explore. When she gave those up, she soon found that the uniform was no longer there. Stranded in

London, with no money, no possessions and no explanation of where she'd been for three years, Tegan bad half

hoped that life could just begin again. It wasn't so easy.

`Look, was all the Doctor was managing to say in between Tegan's rant as they waded through the slush that was

forming on the ground.

Ì mean, how do you think I feel? I made a big decision after all that mess with the Daleks:

`Look -'

Ì left, tried to rebuild my life, got my job back! I had to call in some favours for *that* to happen, I can tell

you...'

'Look!'

...and then, just when I think I'm all back to normal, *you* come back into my life!'

`Well, I actually think it was the other way around: That stopped her in her tracks and they stood speechless for a

moment or two. 'I'd moved on too,Tegan. I accepted your decision to leave, though I didn't want you to. And then

***you* come back into *my* life.'**

If this had been a film, thought Tegan, we'd now be getting a flashback of her inexplicable return to the TARDIS.

Maybe it'd be in black and white, with the Sontarans shot from low angles with moody lighting. Or maybe it

would be a sit-com, with Gareth Jenkins's comic belittling of the Doctor supplemented by comedy stings of incidental

music. But this was real life - and for the third time, Tegan found herself trapped with the Doctor, never

knowing when or even *if* she'd ever get home again.

`But here we are: The Doctor's voice was soothing and calm now - a gentle reminder of the Doctor she'd

knownÀnd we have to deal with it. And you need to make a decision. Do you want to stay with me, or shall I try to

take you home?'

Ì think...' said Tegan, 'that we should find shelter before we freeze to death: She smiled at the Doctor properly

for the first time since she'd come back into his life, then hooked her arm through his and they made their way

again.

A few hours earlier, when the TARDIS had taken off, the Doctor had looked at Tegan, who was beginning to

shake a little, her nerves catching up with her.

`Well: he had said. `That's one of my uninvited guests returned to their correct time-stream...'

Tegan didn't react.

`He seemed like a sound chap' The Doctor grandly flicked a few switches on the console and then said to

Tegan, 'Where to now?'

`Home?' Tegan said, quickly. The Doctor fiddled with some more switches on the consoleÀnd whilst you're

doing that, you can explain to me why you can't seem to leave me alone:

Ì was just as surprised as you were,Tegan:

`You weren't the one who was kidnapped...' There was bitterness in Tegan's voice.

`Kidnapped? Oh, don't be so melodramatic.fhe Doctor drew breath to defend himself further, but the look on

her face made him catch himself. Ì'm sorry. Whatever it was that brought you here... well, it's gone:

`For now:

The Doctor paused. He then absent-mindedly punched at a key-pad. Are you... *sure* you want to go home?'

Tegan began to say something but then changed her mind. 'Oh, I don't know!' was all she had managed before

she had to grab hold of the TARDIS console. The whole room lurched out of kilter. A deafening grinding noise

was coming out of the controls, whilst sparks were flying from the time rotor.

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`Doctor!'

Ì know:

`We're out of control!'

Ì know. **Hold on:The Doctor eased some levers and frantically typed at a keypad. 'If I can just get us**

landed... *a-ha!'*

Tegan's knuckles had begun to go white by the time the floor levelled out and the TARDIS's ping told them that

they'd come to rest somewhere. Whilst she caught her breath, the Doctor fiddled with more switches.The console'

was groaning, but a firm fist hammered down from the Doctor got the scanner screen open. It showed nothing

but *white.*

The snow was becoming a blizzard: not especially freezing, but impossible to walk through. The Doctor and

Tegan had been walking for only a few minutes, but had given conversation up as a bad idea. They'd seen no

signs of life, but had heard the dull sound of traffic in the distance.

Tegan was lagging a few metres behind.This Doctor was unnerving her a bit. She was familiar with the concept

of regeneration, of course: when she'd first met the Doctor, he had changed within a few hours. For a while

afterwards, Tegan had wondered if a regeneration would be a regular thing. At every point when the Doctor

was in danger - and there were a falr amount of these points - the thought 'What will he look like

tomorrow?' had always flashed through her mind.

The Doctor was now standing still. He turned to face Tegan. 'Here, we can shelter in this: He was pointing

towards a derelict caravan sitting by the side of the road they'd been walking along. It was an old burger van. Its

windows and shutters were all locked and bolted, but its door swung open in the wind.

`Great,' said Tegan, with as much sarcastic enthusiasm as she could muster.

The light inside the burger van still worked, but the heater didn't. `We can wait here until the snow dies

away'

`What if we're here until *we* die away?'

The Doctor stared out of the window. 'Hmm?'

Tegan began to laugh:You haven't changed *that* much have you? How long has it been - for you, I mean - since I

last saw you?'

Òh, it's hard to say. It depends on whether you're talking from a point of individual perception - and of course,

my being a Time Lord will affect that a great deal - or from that of a strictly fixed localised chronology, in which

case -'

`How long, Doctor?'

À few months, I suppose. A year, maybe.You?'

About a year.'

`You don't look any different'

`You do'

`Well, perhaps your hair...' said the Doctor, tilting his head back to affect a down-the-nose look.

`Funny; said Tegan. Ì was going to say the same thing about you'

She'd called in on old friends, both in London and during a visit to Melbourne. They all had the excitement of

seeing her again, but when Tegan was asked what happened since that day in 1981, she'd not been able to answer.

Her friends soon lost interest. The phone stopped ringing. The bills piled up.

For a few weeks, she drifted. She travelled: it seemed that the endless planet-hopping had made her itchy. She

went round Europe - a continent she'd not seen much of. Not much outside airports anyway. But it was all so

dull. It was people leading their uneventful lives.Very humdrum.

She decided she needed her job back, so wrote a letter. When no reply came, she telephoned. When her message

wasn't returned, she went to the offices of the airline and demanded to see the personnel director

`Life with you was... it was bizarre; said Tegan, with a wry smile. 'There were times when I doubted if it was all

actually happening! She pulled the blanket they'd found under the burger van's counter tighter around her

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shoulder. Although a219

respite from the outside, the van was still numbingly cold.

`Half the time I was scared out of my wits; she continued. 'The other half, I didn't know which way I was

facing: She let out a little laugh`Some of it was fun, though:

Èxcept. ..' began the DoctorÌt started not to be so much fun, didn't it?'

Tegan didn't answer. The Doctor used his sleeve to wipe the plastic window in the van's door free of

condensation`The snow's still strong,' he said.

He sat down on the floor next to her and she instinctively offered him part of her blanket. The Doctor instead

pulled his cape around himself -his head now being the only part of his body not covered in royal blue.

They sat quietly for a few moments, then the Doctor spoke.

Ì've travelled with a lot of friends, he said. `Some have been people I've loved, some have been people I've felt

responsible for. Some were forced upon me, some I invited. Some I adored the company of, others drove me to

distraction. Some have been strong, and some have needed protection. I can honestly say, I think you're the only

one who was all of those things'

`You never explained what happened back in the TARDIS,' said Tegan, changing the subject.

`What? Oh, our little drama? It seems the time-alignment field was damaged by... something or other, and we

had to make an emergency landing'

`But why did we have to leave the TARDIS? It was nice and warm back there'

`Well, yes - I'm sorry about that,' the Doctor said at speed. The TARDIS self-repair is at work, and, well, during its

operation, the console room is deprived of its oxygen supply. Being cooped up in the innards of the TARDIS can

be so depressing... So, I thought we'd explore:

Tegan was suspicious. She'd never heard of the TARDIS's repair

systems cutting off the oxygen supply before. Only

you, Doctor, would think it a good idea to explore in the middle of a blizzard. Only you!'

`Don't you find it exciting? The scanner didn't tell us a thing. We could be anywhere! *Anywhen!* Doesn't a puzzle

like that fill you with curiosity?' `Not anymore:

Tegan had snapped those words out, slightly too loud, and immediately regretted them She turned, expecting to see

the Doctor looking stern. Instead, he looked more resigned than anything`No, perhaps not,' he said.

Down the other end of the van, there was a gap in the roof and snow was falling in, creating a puddle on what

would have been the driver's seat - had the seat still been there. The Doctor got up and walked over. He looked

up through the hole.The snow was falling about his shoulders and sticking on his hair, but even as he stood there

for a few seconds, the snow was turning into rain.

Òxidation, he said, grandly

`What?' said Tegan.

`The deterioration of iron or steel, caused by moisture. More commonly known as rust. This van's been here a

long time, it would seem.This hole is quite large:

`Fascinating.'

`But that's just the point!' said the Doctor. 'It *is* fascinating. It's the workings of nature, a tiny cog in the wheel

of life. Did you know that the presence of sodium chloride speeds up rusting? If not, then why not? How have

you managed to live as long as you have without needing to know that?'

Ùnder what circumstances could I possibly need to -'

A thirst for knowledge, Tegan! A curiosity, a hunger...' He crouched down beside her. As he talked, he

gesticulated theatrically and his eyes shone with enthusiasm. 'Tegan, I tried to show you the universe! We saw

many places and met many people - but there's still so much to see, so much to experience. I've been exploring

for hundreds of years and I feel like I've barely started...'

The sound of rain was now steady and regular on the van's roof. The angle of the vehicle - the back wheels had

long since been salvaged and the back bumper rested on the ground - meant that the water coming in at the

front was now beginning to drain towards them

Òh, never mind that: the Doctor said. 'It's only water. I'm talking about the universe, the entire cosmos! An

infinite - literally *an infinite* - amount of places to go...'

`Doctor... 'Tegan began. She then broke off and said, 'I'm getting *wet.*' `What were you going to say, Tegan?'

The Doctor was ig 22

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oring her efforts to nudge further away from the increasing puddle.

Ìt's not that I didn't enjoy travelling with you. I did. And I loved Nyssa, and Turlough though I'd never have told

him.AndAdric... And yes, you *did* show me the universe. Or, at least, as much of it as I wanted to see. But... look, I'm

25 years old. What with my time with you and having to fight to get my job back, not only do I feel like I'm 55,

but I only have the experience of a 21-year-old. In my profession, that counts for a lot:

On her first morning back working for the airline, Tegan walked to work with her bead held proud. She was

running early - a good half-hour or so early - but it wasn't an attempt to curry favour or impress; it was plain

and simple eagerness. *Of course, she still bad the feeling... the feeling that one day, the Doctor would come back*

in to her life. It had happened before - and given his love of twentieth-century Earth, it could easily happen again.

But, she now bad those feelings less and less.

She no longer walked nervously in public, no longer looked behind her every few seconds. She'd found that

she could relax at weekends. She'd even stopped carrying emergency toiletries and a spare pair of knickers in her

handbag every time she went out to get a paper just on the off chance that she might get whisked off to an alien

planet or the middle of the eleventh century.

If the Doctor was going to cross paths with her again, he would have done so by now. It bad been months *after*

all. No, she thought after her first morning back at the terminal, all that's behind me.And that was the exact

moment when - in a blinding flash of light, with her lunch and everything else around her vanishing in an

instant - she was transported into the TARDIS.

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The rain was now deafening on the van roof.

A-ha!` said the Doctor from inside a cupboard. He'd dived his head and arms into the storage compartments

under the counter and now came out with an umbrella in his hand`Come on, let's see what it's like outside.

He opened the door and stood outside, the umbrella - which had

certainly seen better days - doing its

laughable best to keep him dry. He was taking a lungful of air as Tegan came to the door. She stood inside the van,

looking out at the sun breaking the clouds ahead of them.

`Cheer up: said the Doctor, knowing he was sounding like a hurt child.

Ì'll be okay' she said. t's just... I feel a bit out of it, you know? I don't know where my "place" is.' She stepped

down from the van on to the muddy ground. walking a few feet away from the Doctor. Ì doubt I ever

`Nonsense. You're a strong person, Tegan. You can make your life what you want it to be:

'Can I?'

`Look, I know the last few hours have been hard for you -'

I've met someone'

The Doctor stopped dead in his tracks. I see'

And he's nice - he's good for me. Makes me feel, well, "settled" I suppose'

She turned round to face the Doctor, but he avoided her glance. `Where now? Back to the TARDIS?' said

Tegan.

"there's a light,' said the Doctor, pointing to what appeared to be a tower about a mile or so away. They

both became aware of a growing rumble above them.Tegan looked up just in time to see a large passenger plane

pass over their heads at a relatively low altitude.

`Heathrow!' she said with a combination of puzzlement and surprise.

Ìt's the twenty-third of February 1985: said the Doctor: 1.00 pm.

Well, 12.54 actually.About the time you were

whisked away, am I right? Well, it's only a mile or two to the terminal. Off you go'

The Doctor motioned for her to get a move on. Tegan was speechless. `You know what?' the Doctor said,

laughing:I think that may be the first time I've seen you without something to say.'

Tegan visibly relaxed. She put one hand on the Doctor's shoulder and leant up to kiss him on the cheek. `Thank

you: she whispered, and then began walking towards the airport.

The Doctor knew deep down it was the right thing for her to do. She deserved better - and this way, she might

get it. But... he'd had to make sure, of course.

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He watched Tegan walk confidently across the field. She never looked back.

That Time I Nearly Destroyed The

World Whilst Looking For A Dress

Joseph Lidster

Start crying, weep for all the miseries that are coining to you. Your wealth is all rotting, your clothes are all

eaten up by moths. All your gold and silver are corroding away, and the same corrosion will be your own

sentence, and eat into your body. It was a burning fire that you stored up as your treasure for the last

days.'

James V, i-ili

Well, darling, all the Millennium stories have to start with a quote from the Bible, don't they! Adds to the whole

drama of the thing. The last days...

Of course, we know now that the world didn't end at the stroke of midnight on New Year's Eve 1999. There

was no Y2K. No Armageddon. To be honest, it didn't even change much. Well, except for in the minds of us western

folk, with our desperate longing to be a part of History. Newsreaders, some young, blonde and pretty,

others older, stern and authoritative, winked excitedly at us as they proclaimed that 'this Moment will live on in

History'. Their radio voices and television faces comforted us and excited us as they told us that we were special

because we were Here and we were Now and we were living in this Historical, Unforgettable Moment of

Historical Importance.

The thing, you see, is that I actually wasn't there. I really had become a part of history. I really had become

History How, you ask? Had that strange and fabulous little man, with his time-travelling Police Box, whisked me off

to the building of the Great Wall of China or to the tearing-down of that not-so-great Wall in Berlin or to any of

those other Moments in History?

Er... no.

No, darling. I met God at a celebrity funeral and She sent me through *Time* to look for a dress.

Have you got a light? Remember when we all gave up in the Eighties? Thank God, smoking's back in. So, anyway,

it's difficult to know where to begin telling your story when you've been History itself. Do I tell it in a historically

chronological order? Or do I tell it in the order that I experienced it? Either way, the continuity's

going to be buggered.

I suppose, darling, I should start with introducing myself. My name's Polly. You might recognise me from such

magazines as *Hello!, OK'* and *Heat.* You remember? 'Music Mogul Polly Wright Shows Us Her Exquisite

Gazebo!' or those pictures of me putting my shopping into the car at Sainsbury's. No? Not your sort of thing? Oh

well. I was born in... oh, you know all about my early life and what I got up to in the Sixties?You know about how I

travelled through Time and Space with a renegade Beale known only as the Doctor? Well, of course *you* do. So

when in my life, in my personal history, did you get up to? When I had that job interview at GEZ?* Oh, well, I got

the job.

Yes, it was back in '92 when I became the PA to John Maurice. Didn't like him much. Actually, darling, didn't

like him at all - he was a full-time charisma vacuum. But, I *loved* the job.After Husband No. 1 died, I realised how

much I'd changed. I'd always been the life and soul. My friends used to say it to me all the time. 'Polly, dear,

you're the life and soul!' In the Sixties, I was the glamour girl (and, of course, the sexy time traveller). In the

Seventies, I was the Queen of Disco. In the Eighties... well, it became all mortgages, salads and cricket matches.

Simon had managed to bore the Polly out of Polly. The job for GEZ brought *me* back. I was at all the showbiz

parties and knew simply everyone. For four years, I was Polly Wright - socialite.

Then, in '96, tragedy struck! Take That split up. Their fans were

devastated, of course, and one fan, in grief-

fuelled desperation, turned to Mr Maurice for support. She was, you might say, very energetic in her grief and he did

his best but his heart simply wasn't in it. I found him in a hotel room with a tangerine in his mouth and a piglet

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licking ice cream from his toes. A video of *Maid Marion Does The Merry Men* was stuck on the infamous 'feeding

the poor' scene and a 19-year-old in a Gary Barlow T-shirt was stuck under the once-famous Mr Maurice. His

wife thanked me for keeping the story out of the tabloids by signing GEZ over to me. Naturally, I was overjoyed!

And so, for the next few years, I ran GEZ. Darling, we represented anyone who was anyone in the music

industry. We signed up lesbian trio Girls, Girls, Girls and shock-rockers Slice The Animals. I was personally

responsible for forty-two Number One hits in 1998 alone! And, of course, my own profile grew immensely. No party

was complete without Polly! (Like Edina, Kylie and Tara, I had become so important that I no longer needed a

surname.) I was at the opening of The Dusk, The Rapture and The Envelope. I had a brief marriage to the gay

one out of Boyzzzz, and had well-publicised struggles with the booze and bulimia.

See *Doctor Who: Short Trips - Companions*

Which was all well and good but, sweetie, there was really only one party to be seen back in the Nineties.The

celebrity funeral! Guaranteed to get your face in the paper. I was at Versace's (comforting Diana) and at Diana's

(comforting Elton). As H from Steps said when he collected his MOBO award, 'From death comes life.

Mascara running, brave smile, front-page picture, mark on history, proof I exist.

And it was at one of these funerals that my life changed once more. Do you remember Jane Vapid? Used to

present *Crime: It Can Pay* (one of those ghastly reconstruction programmes where members of the public are

paid to solve real-life crimes). Anyway, back in April '99, as she was leaving Great Ormond Street Hospital, where

she'd been giving jelly babies to kids with AIDS, she was shot dead.

At first we all feared it was a revenge attack because of the programme she presented. Headlines screamed: 'The

Hitman and Her.' Naturally, we were 'then disappointed to discover that the guy who killed her was merely a

stalker. I mean, a *stalker?* We all had one of those (mine was a lovely young estate agent from Tunbridge Wells).

Nowhere near as exciting or historical. Still, the public were devastated. The same rent-acrowd that had lined

the streets of London when Diana died, when labour got in, when Posh and Becks married, lined the streets once

more. Headlines screamed: The People's Presenter Murdered!'

Oh, sorry, darling. Am I rambling? Well, to get to the point, GEZ were commissioned to do Jane's Official Tribute

Song, a re-release of Fine Young Cannibals' *She Drives Me Crazy,* so, luckily, I got to go to the funeral.There I was,

sweating under the studio lights like a pery at a school disco, in my black Stella McCartney number and Jimmy

Choo's, watching as the coffin was brought down the aisle of Westminster Abbey. I looked around at my colleagues

and friends from the industry.All of us with the same 'I'm grief-stricken but immaculately made-up' look on our

faces. All of us thinking about the next day's papers.All of us hoping to hear Terry Wogan mention our names on

the TV commentary. An army of clones desperately gasping for oxygen in that great hall of history, craving

existence as the second Millennium careered towards its last days.

And, as the coffin was *Riverdance-d* to the end of its journey, the cameras began to flash. White light

exploding in our faces. White light blinding the blondes. White light. White li-

FLASH!

And then for the briefest second, I saw a bomb exploding during a fairytale wedding and the Queen Mum's

severed head flying towards me -

FLASH!

Darling, I'm not too sure what happened next but I felt something like an elastic band snap in my head. I remember

someone saying, 'Give her the kiss of life' and... and that's it! The blondes became as still as the stone statues of

the kings and queens of history that surrounded them.AndTime froze. And I lay still. And all was silent.

Then She appeared, wearing a Lacroix sequined trouser-suit and a tinsel halo, smiling down at me as She

descended through the ceiling. I could hear a choir of cherubs harmonising as white light emanated from Her

smile like a bad toothpaste commercial.Then, She too became still as She stood before me.

`Polly! Sweetie! How the devil are you?' She asked, reaching behind and switching off a CD player.The

harmonising was halted.

I stuttered for a 22

w 6hile and then told Her that, actually I was a bit confused. I asked Her who She was. Ì might

be any number of things!' She announced dramatically. Her voice was odd, like a mixture of a man's and a

woman's. 'I might be an angel or a devil! I might be a wicked witch annoyed that She wasn't invited to the

party! I might be...'

Àre you... are you God?' I interrupted.

Èr... yeah. God.That's me.'

Òh. So am I dead then?'

`Possibly' Her voice began to rise again`Perhaps you are. Perhaps you're not. Perhaps...'

`Don't milk it, darling. Why are you here?'

`Very well.' She yawned. Well, I'm a bit bored really. I'm going to let you into a secret.' She leant towards me and

whispered`The world isn't going to end on New Year's Eve:

I was, naturally, still very confused. `So?'

`So? So? So, I want something to happen. So much has happened in the last few thousand years. Mankind has

achieved so much. But, look at you now.You've stalled.You used to fight wars against dictators and injustice! The

biggest war you fight now is against the "telltale signs of aging". It's like you all think that just because we're

reaching the end of a Millennium, well, that that's enough! The clocks are going to turn, the book's going to

end, so let's not even bother anymore:

'And?'

Ànd... and I want to shake things up a bit:

`How?'

`By giving you what you want. I'm going to make sure that this Millennium is something to remember!'

`You're here to give me what I want?'

`Yep. I'm the genie in the bottle. The fairy godmother. Jimmy Saville'

`You're here to give me a new liver?'

There was a pause. Obviously not. I began to think about what else I wanted.

`Darling, there's no need to think.You want the perfect dress!' I laughed. 'Sorry?'

`For the party you're going to on New Year's Eve. The celebrity fancy-dress thing in Edinburgh. You want to be

the picture on the front page: Then, suddenly, She whispered into my ear, 'You want that extra day of life'

Ì'm not that shallow!' I replied. `There are other more important... Wait, you're going to give me a dress?'

Òh yeah, 'cos like that would be so much fun. No, Polly I'm sending you through time. I'm going to let you find the

perfect dress. I'm taking you shopping!'

Suddenly, She spun me around, kissing me on the lips, and whispered, `Happy New Year!'

Her voice trailed off as my world, my story, changed. I was in a tunnel, a vortex. Shapes moved in weird and

wonderful ways as the colours, so many colours, coalesced and grew out of each other. I felt my eyes being drawn

out of my head as I flew through the impossible light. It was beautiful. It was unearthly. It was just like the

screensaver on my laptop. And, as the colours began to bleed into white, as my impossible journey began to end,

thousands of years before and a few seconds after it began, I heard God's voice.

`Find it, Polly Wright. Find what you need! From death find life!' The voice raised into a screech as the white

overloaded my senses and then... Silence.

I woke up in a dark room with straw sticking up my nose. It wasn't the first time so I didn't panic. Darling, I

know a dungeon when I smell one. Still, it wasn't exactly comfortable, especially with my face pressed up against

the stone wall. I started to stretch when suddenly I heard a voice behind me.

`Hello?' it simpered.

I managed to grunt a response.

Àre you a messenger from our Lord?'

I tried not to stifle a laugh as I turned to face her.

`No, darling. My name's Polly. What's yours?'

Ì am...' She cut off as we looked at each other. It was like looking in a mirror! We were nearly identical. 'I am

the... Lady Marion,' she managed to stutter before fainting.

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I stood up and looked down at her. She really did look like a younger me! And what with the surgery, so did I. It was

remarkable.And she had a dress

to die for. So that's why God sent me here - the perfect dress. It was green and tight-fitting and, of course, mediaeval

in design. I was about to kneel down to try and wake her when suddenly I heard footsteps outside the cell door.

For a moment, I panicked then figured, what the hell, I might as well find out where I am. I cautiously headed over towards

the door when, suddenly, two faces appeared at the bars. One was a bloke, quite fit in an old-fashioned, Fifties-movie-star

kind of way and the other was a young, dark-haired girl. We all looked a bit startled and then the bloke spoke.

Hello? Who are you?'

'Pol... er, the Lady Marion' I replied. 'Who are you?'

He introduced himself as Ian Chesterton and his companion as Susan. `We've been... er, travelling... and we seem to

have lost track of time. Can you tell me what year it is?' he asked.

Bugger. I didn't want to get caught out so I explained that I'd been imprisoned for so long that I no longer knew

what the year was.The girl was all perky and eager.

'Oh, Mr Chesterton! We have to rescue her!'

While I appreciated the sentiment, her voice immediately began to grate. She was like an excitable chihuahua.

`Stand back from the door; he announced dramatically.

I stepped back, nearly tripping over the real Marion, as he attacked the door with his shoulder. It didn't budge.

Òh, Mr Chesterton, are you all right?' simpered Susan.

Ì'll be fine, Susan' He rubbed his shoulder. 'That door is sturdier than it looks'

`Grandfather might have something in the TA...' she trailed off as she looked at me. 'He might have something in

our travelling caravan!' She looked strangely proud.

Good, I thought. Off you toddle then Susan

Ì'll go; replied Ian.`You wait here and keep the Lady Marion company' Double bugger, I thought, as he ran down the

corridor. I smiled politely at Susan.

`Why did they imprison you?' shrieked the girl in an unnecessarily high-pitched voice. Before I had time to answer she

continued. 'Grandfather says we shouldn't interfere with history but he wouldn't leave you here to rot! He's gone to

the village with Miss Wright!'

`Miss Wright? But, darling, I'm Miss Wright'

`Lady Marion Wright?' She looked confused.

'Er... right'

Suddenly all hell broke loose as Ian came running back.

`Susan! We're trapped!' he announced breathlessly.

Two guards armed with swords appeared.

`The Sheriff wants to see you; said one to Ian.

Susan screamed so loudly that even Ian looked annoyed at his friend. Me, I was ready to slap her. I'd never

screamed whenever *I'd* been captured by guards or mercenaries.As Ian and Susan were led away by the guards, I sat down.

What now?

I'm not sure whether I fell asleep but everything seeined to fade to black and then fade up again. Marion was now sat

on the pile of straw in the corner and I was sat on the other side of the cell.

`Has our Lord sent you, mistress Polly?'

`Well, kind of. But not in the way you think.'

Òh, have I finally succumbed to the hunger? Does our Lord want

me to sit by His side in Heaven? You are my angel?'

Jesus, I was surrounded by girls who needed a slap.

`No. I'm just passing through. Doing a bit of shopping:

`What is... shopping?'

This girl didn't know what shopping was! What kind of godforsaken hellhole of a time was this? I just hoped they

had gin.

`Why don't you tell me about yourself?'

And do you know what, darling? I actually found myself becoming interested in her story. I couldn't remember the

last time I'd actually been that interested in anyone else but here, away from everything, I found myself being drawn into

her tale. Turns out she was Maid Marion. As in Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest and all that. I tried not to think of the

film I'd found playing in Mr Maurice's hotel room. But, get this! Robin's a bit of a sod really.The way Marion spoke about

him, you'd think he was a saint but, by the sounds of it, he treated her like crap. And, yet, she loved him. For the briefest of

moments, I tried to remember the last time I'd felt...

`But he's a good man really.' She interrupted my thoughts.

`Marion, he's sleeping with every wench in the village!'

`But he loves me! He says that everything he does, he does it for me:

I told her about life where I was froin (although I substituted 'the twentieth century' for `God's kingdom'). Perhaps, I

figured, this is also why God sent me here. Not just for a dress,

but to actually make a difference. I came over all

Germaine Greer as I explained to her that she was a person in her own right and, you know, I think it started to sink

in.Then I suggested that we should try and escape.

`Perhaps, we should swap dresses? Let them think that I'm you: I needed that dress.

`Should we not wait for one of the men...' She trailed off, her eyes suddenly sparkling with life.'Perhaps, I could

suggest to one of the guards that I would like to hold his sword:

I laughed at her suddenly brazen attitude. I was beginning to like this girl-

`Marion!' shouted a voice from the door.

We both looked up. It was Ian.

`Robin!' shrieked Marion

`Marion!' shrieked Susan, her head popping up next to Ian's... er... Robin's.

`That's Robin?' I tried desperately not to shriek. 'But he looks like...' `Mr Chesterton!' shrieked Susan, her

voice about to break the sound barrier. 'And... '

She finally shut up as she noticed Marion stood next to me.

`Marion! You wench!' exclaimed Robin. 'Why, there be two of you now! What larks we shall have!'

Òh, Robin!' cried Marion.

Robin booted down the door and I have to admit, darling, that at this point even I could see the attraction.

He swaggered in, with Susan scampering along beside him.

Ìsn't it wonderful?' she squealed. 'He's Robin Hood!'

`Yeah, so I gathered; I replied. Being the nearest Marion, Robin

approached me first.

`Well, if it baint be my lady Marion! Your imprisonment hasn't been good to your pretty face!'

By now, I'd had enough of the whole situation. I was in a cell in mediaeval England, obviously caught up in

someone else's story. I had a girl next to me, my double, simpering away with Susan about how wonderful and

brave this bloke was.And now, Robin Hood was denigrating my looks! God! What had I done to deserve this?

Okay, don't answer that - we don't have all night. Robin leered at me and lurched in for a kiss. I quickly brought

my knee up and down he went, clutching his crown jewels - just as a sword swished through the air where his

neck had been!

`My lady, you have saved my life!' he wheezed.

The guard who'd appeared with the sword regained his balance and prepared to thrust the sword down when

Marion suddenly spun him around and punched him out cold.

`Take that you overbearing, male chauvinist pig!' shouted Marion, blowing on her clenched knuckles.

For a few seconds we all stood there.Then the silence was broken by a slow clapping. A man entered the room.

`Perhaps, I should have you join my men-at-arms.'

Marion immediately backed away.

`The Sheriff of Nottingham, I presume. I didn't know what was going on but I was pretty certain who'd been

holding Marion prisoner.

"That is indeed who I am; he replied, not quite twirling his moustache. Ànd who are you that shares the aspect of

the Lady Marion?Two Marions, what conspiracy is this?'

Ì might well very ask the very same question myself; said another voice. A voice I recognised. The Doctor!

He entered the cell 231

with Ian Chesterton.

Àpothecary!' snarled the sheriff. 'I demand you return to your apother... er... to what you have promised

me you can achieve!' Like me, he was desperately trying to keep some control over the situation.

I nearly blurted out the Doctor's name but decided not to. He looked like he did when we had first met and I

figured it might be dangerous to change his past.

Ànd who is this?' demanded the sheriff, looking down at the winded Robin.

Ì... am Robin... of Sherwood!' he tried to proclaim.

`But this man here -' the sheriff indicated Ian - 'he is Robin of Sherwood.'

`He's not the real Robin!' I announced, still determined not to shriek.

The/ Doctor replied. 'Well, of course he isn't, madam: He clutched urgently at the lapels on his jacket. 'Don't

you think we don't already... er, we don't know that. Now perhaps you'd like to explain what you're doing here,

hmm?'

`God knows' I replied. I didn't like the way he was looking at me.As if... as if he'd already inet ine. Which was, of

course, impossible. I think.

`Grandfather!' shrieked Susan. 'There are two Marions and Mr Chesterton looks like Robin Hood! I don't

understand! I'm frightened, Grandfather!'

`Shush, child. I think we can all see what's happened here:

There was a pause as we all turned to the Doctor.

'Well... it's quite obvious really, but I wouldn't expect any of you to understand:

There was another pause.

`Well, Doctor?' asked Ian impatiently.

We all stared at the Doctor just as... well, just as the air in the room shimmered and a girl appeared. She was

looking down at her feet and talking.

`Timmy! Stop licking me! I said...' She trailed off as she looked up and around. 'Oh! Where are the smugglers?' She

turned and saw the Doctor. `Grandfather?'

There was a suitably dramatic pause and then the Doctor spoke.'Susan?'

For some unearthly reason I wasn't that surprised by the appearance of yet another double, but my brain gave up

on trying to understand.As both Susans began to scream, I felt something in my head snap.The cell and its occupants

began to fade away and I felt myself being drawn once more into the vortex.

As I hurtled once more through the tunnel of colour, I hoped I hadn't messed up history. And, more importantly,

I hoped that I'd be able to get a decent dress from wherever next I ended up.

FLASH!

And then...

***And then you arrived in a period known as the 1930s'* Well, so I thought darling! How did you know?**

`*You sent this. I believe its known as a letter'* That wasn't meant for you! It was meant for...

'Ben,

Ì don't know why I'm choosing to write to you but just in case I don't get out of here, I want you to know where I

ended up. Darling, it's a long story but I seem to be stuck shooting around throughTime! Not sure how or why, but

I've just travelled from mediaeval England to the 1930s. Some town called Keelmouth. It's very pretty, in a simple

kind of way. All beaches and old people in deckchairs eating ice cream. Right up your street

Anyway, I'm meant to be looking for a dress but all I seem to have done is caused a bit of a stir! I know, not like me

at all. So, I arrived here a few hours ago and was bursting for a pee. I couldn't find a loo anywhere but did manage to

find myself a B&B. Have to be honest, it wasn't exactly the Hilton, but at least it was clean. Mrs Hutchings, the old

woman who owned it, welcomed me with open arms as she thought I'd add a touch of dass to the place. Which was

nice. I decided to book a room as I wasn't sure how long I'd be stuck in the Thirties.You know how it is.

`So, there I was, in my room when I heard a boy coughing. I stuck my head into the corridor and saw one of the

residents leaving the boy's room. I'd inet him briefly earlier - a Mr Prentice. He didn't see me, which suited me as I'd

already noticed that 2 3t2

233here was something odd about him. When he went downstairs, I wandered over to the boy's

room and peeked in. He'd stopped coughing! In fact, he was laughing at something! It was all a bit of a mystery and I

was about to return to my room when I heard footsteps coming

back up the stairs. It was Prentice and he had the

Doctor with him! Yes, the Doctor!

Ònly, he looked like he did when we first met him. Before he changed, I mean.The Doctor and Prentice were talking

about the boy. Prentice was saying that he did genuinely care about the child especially as he'd once had a son

himsell'Ibe Doctor then told Prentice about his granddaughter, Susan, and about how he'd do anything to protect

her. Ben, it made me think of Mikey.The Doctor's eyes were full of sparkle and pride as he spoke

about Susan. Apparently, they were inseparable. I thought about Mikey and his feelings towards me. I'd asked him to come to

Edinburgh with me for the Millennium. He said he'd rather spend it with people he cared about and had gone to some rave

in Jerusalem I wonder if I'll ever see him again.

`So, anyway, the Doctor looked deeply upset as Prentice was telling him about how ill the boy, Craig, still appeared to be.

Now, I know he was always going on at us about interfering with Time but I couldn't stand by and let the Doctor have the

wool pulled over his eyes. I introduced myself as a fellow guest and explained that, actually Craig wasn't ill. The Doctor tried

to shush me as I showed them into Craig's room. Poor old sod really was concerned about the boy.

`Prentice continued to look shifty. I said that Craig was only pretending and that I thought that Prentice had put him up to

it. Ben, I was really angry. I'd never been the most maternal person but Prentice was using the Doctor's love for his grandchild

to manipulate him somehow.

I didn't know what Prentice wanted but then he suddenly totally lost the plot. He started screaming at the Doctor and

yelling about messing him about. I started to back away as Prentice began to shout about how he was sick of people like

the Doctor interfering and about how he'd make hiin pay. He had some kind of metal box with flashing lights under his

coat which he pulled out and began to wave around. He screamed about how "the Reversal" would still happen, but not

as the Doctor wanted.

"Your granddaughter!" he screamed.

"Leave Susan out of this!" barked the Doctor.

"Too late!" he shouted as he pressed one of the buttons. Some kind of laser shot out of the box and through a nearby

window. I instinctively ran towards Craig as the laser shot through the window and out towards an island just off the coast.

"Now, you'll know what it's like to lose someone!" screamed Prentice. "Your granddaughter's been sent back to who-

knows-when!"

"The Doctor suddenly lunged at Prentice with his walking stick and they began to struggle with the box. Laser beams

started shooting out in all directions.

I didn't know what was happening but hoped I'd done the right thing. At last the Doctor could *see* what Prentice was

really like! The Doctor tried to get me to help him, telling me that each of the beams was "confusing the time streams".

I ran towards the Doctor when...'

FLASH!

Never mind the time streams. I'm confused. How did I manage to post that letter?

`Your disruption of the timelines had already begun. They were in a state ˚Blitz:

Does that make any sense?

`*To our temporal engineers it does, yes.'*

Sounds like technobabble to me.

So, the Doctor's granddaughter had been sent back to... '

To mediaeval England! That's where the second Susan came from!
Except that because of your interference

that time period was

already-.

Fu... I mean, in a state of flux! Blimey, darling, I really did mess up. didn't I?

And tell me where you next remember arriving.'

Well there were a few more short trips. Pompeii, the Galapagos Islands, Colditz. And then... well, this is what confused

me. I'd been sent through time to look for a dress so where is the last place you're going to look for fashion tips?

7 really wouldn't know.'

The 1980s! I mean... really! Did God want me to celebrate the Millennium in leg-warmers and pixie boots?

FLASH!

I was watching a cricket match.As if things couldn't get any worse. Simon had always enjoyed it but, frankly, I didn't

see the point in a sport where you couldn't see the players' thighs. Apparently England were playing Australia. I

think.To be honest, I'd never understood it. I looked around for some reason why I might be here. I was starting to

think that maybe God hadn't sent me on this journey just for a dress. Everywhere I'd been, I'd been able to help. I'd

saved Robin Hood's life. I'd shown the Doctor what Mr Prentice was really like. I'd helped some poor woman trapped

in the wrong time in Colditz Castle.

`You *gave Fraulein Klein your mobile telephone.'*

She was lost! Trapped in the wrong time! And she reminded me of one of Simon's old boating chums from Tarrant.

So?

***So, she used the technology in the telephone to change history.'* Oh, and I suppose Germany won the War, did**

they?

No. But they did win the 1966 World Cup.'

No *way!*

`*Yes... way.'*

Yes, well, anyway, darling, so I was at this cricket match. Oh, it was all so

frightfully English as we sat there politely 'oohing' and àaahing' under the

grey sky. But, you know what? I started to enjoy it. Not the game itself Still didn't have a clue what that was all about. In fact,

it all seemed rather familiar.

But, I did begin to enjoy the whole... well, it was just relaxing. For the first time in ages, I wasn't on show. I could just sit back

and relax. I actually started to think fondly of Simon, which was a first! Him and my life before GEZ.The sound of the ball hitting

the bat.The hushed crowd.The terrible haircuts. No paparazzi. No plastic smiles. No postmodernism. Just a simple, dull,

middle-class afternoon under an English sky. God bless the Eighties.

So there I was, trying to relax and just take a breather when

these two young girls started pushing their way past us. Of

course, being English, none of us said anything to begin with. There were a few `tut-tut's and a few hardened stares but

mostly we waited for them to pass.

All except for one man.

The two girls reached the front of the stalls and I began to get this uncomfortable feeling. As if I'd been there before. I

didn't know if it was the game, the crowd or the two girls but something felt... uneasy. They reached the edge of the field

and began to talk to someone and that's when a man shouted down at them.A man sat in a seat two rows in front of me.

Simon.

`Sit down. You're in the way!'

Simon. Husband No. 1. And I suddenly realised why this all seemed so familiar. I was already there. Simon had dragged me

there not long after we'd got married. And Simon, being Simon, hadn't put up with this disturbance to his nice quiet

English afternoon. There we were. Me, pregnant with Mikey. Him with his *Daily Mail.And I* watched as the same scene

played out once more.The girls ignored him and carried on talking.

`Hoi. Sit down. You're blocking the view.'

I felt the same embarrassment that I'd felt before. The girls carried on talking and I began to panic. I didn't know what to

do. I knew changing the past was dangerous, so I figured I should just try and leave. I stood up and tried not to look

forward. Cautiously, I began to edge down my row of seats. I watched as Simon began to clamber over his seats towards

the girls. I watched myself stand up to defend him. I carried on edging towards the end of the row. This was getting

harder and harder as more and more people were leaning forward to see what the cominotion was. I heard my younger

self shouting at the gills once more and continued my feverish sideways walk. I had just reached the end of the row when I

heard my younger self shriek:

Òld? Old? I'm scarcely middle-aged.'

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And I stopped as I remembered how I'd felt. Pregnant, old before my

time, disillusioned. It was at that very point that I'd started to feel unhappy with my life.

It was that girl's very words that had set me on the path to a celebrity funeral in Westminster Abbey, 1999.

Tor a redwood tree,' sneered the young, pretty American girl to my younger self.

As coinebacks go, it hadn't been great but the younger, unhappily married me hadn't known what to say back.

So, you interfered with your own past.'

Yes, I bloody well did.

I started to clamber down over the rows of seats, falling over the middle-aged middle classes as I stumbled

towards the girls.A steward was just approaching them when I practically fell at their feet. Standing up to my full

height, I looked down at the American girl. I still didn't have that witty comeback so I slapped her.

She just stood there in shock as she looked from me to the younger me still in the stalls. Her companion wasn't so

shocked though and she launched herself at me. We rolled onto the pitch, scratching at each other's faces. She

was younger and tougher than me but I'd fought my way into and out of enough club toilets to give as good as I got. I

could just make out Simon as he stared, unable to comprehend how his wife was sat next to him and yet also fighting

on the grass in front of him. The American girl's friend managed to punch me in the face, so I head-butted her.

Suddenly, a man dressed in some bizarre old-fashioned cricket uniform arrived at the scene.

`Peri! Erimem! What's going on?' he asked, breathlessly

`Doctor? You know these two?' It was the third girl. The one Peri and Erimem had been speaking to.

Ah,Tegan.Yes, well this could be rather awkward to explain. I managed to roll over and pin Erimem to the

ground.

`Doctor? Not... not *the* Doctor?' I asked.

`Polly?' He looked down at me, shocked.

`You know this she-devil?' asked Eriinem as she rolled me over and pushed my face into the grass.

`Yes. She's an old... oh no, wait a minute:

He quickly turned away from us and back to the match.

'Catch it, Dilley!' he shouted at one of the cricketers.

Like any of the men on the pitch were interested in anything other than the two women rolling around in the mud!

The ball was soaring through the air and towards one of the fielders. He stood there, staring at us, as the ball shot

past his face and clumped into the pitch.

The Doctor - well, this younger Doctor - muttered under his breath, `Peri! It's too late. History's been changed!'

He was facing the American girl. Both myself and the Australian

girl, Tegan, asked him what was going on.

`Yes, I'd quite like to know as well,' said a new voice.

Of course, darling, it was *another* version of this Doctor.

Another double. Actually, darling, don't mind if I do.

Ìt might be best if you kept your distance. The Blinovitch Effect and all...' began the Doctor, the one who

was stood next to Peri. Unfortunately, Erimem chose that point to fling herself off me. She careered into the

new Doctor and he stumbled forward - straight into the arms of his other self.

Òh no!' I'm not sure which one of them said this as suddenly their faces... well, their faces began to open and

light began to pour out. I scrabbled back away from the scene and began to feel the now-familiar snap as' the vortex

began to fade into view. As the girls screamed and the Doctors dissipated and the crowds began to trample, I stared

into the eyes of my still and silent younger self. How had I come to...

FLASH!

And then, darling, I found myself in another field, only this one was, well, a bit manky all round. And the weather

was even worse than England. God, it was grim. Two men had their backs to me. One was a young lad whose hair

really needed a wash and a cut and who seemed to be wearing pyjamas. The other man was tall, big, muscly and would

have been quite tasty if it hadn't been for the fact that he was wearing an apron and had a beard that birds could

nest in.The bigger man was playing with his huge weapon. He was holding it up and pointing it in the direction of the

other.

`What am I supposed to do with this,Adric?'

The boy replied that it should be quite easy to use. It was just a case of gently moving your hand up and then letting

go.

`We have to be careful, Mang. The Doctor says we shouldn't be doing this. Apparently it could change the history

of your primitive planet. He says we should try and inake peace with the invaders.'

`Peace? History will know of me as Mang the Merciless. I will not show them peace. They shall feel the power of my

weapon:

Mang was raising the bow and arrow when suddenly Adric noticed me. Who are you?' he yelped.

Mang panicked and swung round with the bow and arrow. In his fright he released the arrow and it shot towards

Adric! The boy tried to duck-

FLASH!

That boy should have crashed a spaceship from the future onto prehistoric Earth. He would have wiped out the

dinosaurs.'

Don't be... oh, you're serious.

FLASH!

Ì once pulled a sailor!'

I'd found myself on some kind of sailing ship. I didn't know what year it was and, darling, I didn't care. I'd found

booze! And a drinking partner! Her name was Benny and I think

she was from the future as well because some of the

words that came out of her mouth would have made Prince Philip blush. We'd hit it off immediately in that way that

you do when you've knocked back a few and were comparing pulling stories.

`Yeah. Picked him up in a bar in Soho. God, he was gorgeous.Took him back to mine and ended up playing strip

poker.'

Èvery girl loves a sailor,' Benny slurred. We raised our bottles of cider and chinked them together.

`So,' I continued, 'he was down to his boxers and I was in my bra and knickers and we were onto our second bottle

of tequila...'

`Tequila!' Benny raised her bottle again and I chinked mine with it. And there we were... absolutely

hammered when...' I laughed. `When when my son walked in'

`No way!' Benny was crying with laughter.

`Yeah... '

There was a pause.

Ì didn't... I never saw Mikey for three months after that.'

Benny stopped laughing. Oh'

FLASH!

And then I arrived at home! Kensington. I saw myself coming back from a night out. Hilarious, famous, absolutely

fabulous and simply wonderful Polly Wright! She's still got it!

And I saw my son stood at the top of the stairs. I saw Mikey.And for the first time ever, I saw the look in his eyes.

God, I'd messed up.

FLASH!

And then I was flying through the vortex once more, all thoughts of dresses and parties forgotten. I could see

all the different realities merging. Worlds without ice cream. Worlds where childhood heroes became characters

in porn flicks. Worlds where the dinosaurs never died

out. Tune periods shot past me and crashed into each other. And I began to scream over the sound of centuries

collapsing.

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FLASH!

A-ha.'

And then I found myself here! I assume I buggered up History?

'Indeed you did. You were manipulated in to interfering with a number of nexus points in the history of the

Planet Earth. Your acceptance of everything you had seen in your travels with the Doctor made you the perfect

choice.'

Who did all this?

`*We do not know. But, we shall find out. Oh, yes, we shall.'*

Can you put things back to normal?

`*Yes, but we only have twenty-four hours to save the Earth. At midnight, this planet will be pulled inside out. Its*

currently fluctuating between different histories. Different realities. Different pasts. Different tenses.'

But you'll be able to sort it out?

'I can't. But I know a man who can. One of our best agents.'* And what will happen to *me?

`*We'll send you back. Once History has been repaired.You'll remember some of it, but only as a dream.'*

Oh.

`*That makes you sad? You'd rather Earth, and consequently the universe, was destroyed?'*

No. No, darling, of course not. It's just... oh, I don't know.

`*You're not happy?'*

FLASH!

Saviour of the Universe.And Polly Wright dreams of the Doctor as he's sent to tidy the mess she's made of History.

And she dreams of her son.And she dreams of the one man she ever truly loved.

Awake, my sleeping beauty,' whispers his voice as he gently kisses me on the lips.

I open my eyes and look up at him.

`Ben; I whisper.

His face creases up as he smiles down at me.

Àll right, Duchess?'

Òh, Ben!' I cry as I sit up and hug him.

He laughs as he tries to speak. 'You had some kind of breakdown. Somebody told me you needed the kiss of life'

He pulls away and I ask him where we are.

Àn old mate of ours sneaked you out of the Abbey`

And then our old mate comes into the room. His hair is greyer but, other than that, he looks exactly the same as he

had done in the Sixties.

`Hello, Polly,' he smiles. 'It's good to see you!'

The Doctor scampers towards me and kisses me lightly on the

forehead.

`How are you?'The wonderful smile is replaced by a look of concern. `We've all been terribly worried, you know.'

Ì'm fine,' I say. 'I understand. I really understand' And, with that, I begin to laugh.

That night, I celebrate the end of the Millennium with my oldest friends. We're in an old house that belongs to the

Doctor. It's miles away from London and the industry and, for that, I couldn't be happier.

It isn't just Ben and the Doctor. Jamie is there too. Sweet, innocent Jamie. We drink gallons of '66 Sauvignon (we

all agree that it had been a very good year) and eat a wonderful meal, made by the Doctor hiinself. We tell stories

and sing songs. I tell them tales of my life in show business. The Doctor and Jamie tell us stories of their life, acting as

agents for the Doctor's people - I'm not the only one who's changed! Ben tells us of his life, running a pub in Sydenham

and, because of their normality, I think his stories are my favourite.

We drink more wine and sing more songs. Jamie teaches us how to do the Highland Fling and Ben surprises us all

with a wonderful operatic singing voice. We even play hide-and-seek! Imagine! Four weary, middle-aged friends

playing hide-and-seek! And we reminisce about the time we'd spent travelling together. Not the bad times but the

good. Ben and I pill240

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ow-fighting on the *Galaxian.* The weekend we'd spent on Oakes Minor. Our visit to Venus. So

many good times. The memories play in my inind like rose-tinted, slow-motion flashbacks .

Louis Armstrong begins to sing on the Doctor's old gramophone player and we all fall quiet. Staring into my glass, I

feel the night, the year, the century, the Millennium, drawing to an end.The Doctor, sensing the inood, takes Jamie

outside to see the stars. Ben reaches over to me and gently squeezes my arm.

`You okay, Pol?' he asks

Ì'm fine. I just... it just feels like it's all over. We don't have all the time in the world, do we? We're old. We're all

grown up. It's too late for dreams to come true:

I become silent as I stare into the glowing embers of the dying fire. `How's your wife?' I ask.

`She's... she's gone.' Ben looks uncomfortable.

Then we're both silent.

Then we both try to speak at the same time.

Then we're both silent again.

Then we both laugh.

`Polly_

`Yes, Ben?'

Ì love you.

`Ben...

`Yes, Pol?'

Ì've been waiting years for you to say that:

And, as Louis growls out the final verse, we kiss.

And, outside there are no fireworks. Just the orange ribbons of sunlight streaking across the purple sky, signalling

the dawn of a new day - of a new age. The end of one story and the beginning of another.

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